The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. LXXXIII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1935 NUMBER 1069

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The Week

EUROPEAN diplomacy has been marking time during the past week. In all the capitals, officials were waiting for Hitler's speech before the Reichstag, for the meeting of the League Council at which the Italian aggression against Ethiopia was to be discussed and, more remotely, for the Danubian Conference that takes place in Rome shortly before the end of this month and will deal with the future of Austria. Czechoslovakia and Russia have signed a pact of mutual assistance modeled upon the Franco-Russian agreement. There is no doubt that the Soviet Union will sign similar agreements with the other members of the Little Entente, Jugoslavia and Rumania, and French influence in Eastern Europe, which had been waning, is now reëstablished, thanks to Hitler. The League Council has rarely faced a more thorny problem than that of Italy's imperialistic designs on Ethiopia. It becomes increasingly clear that Mussolini has blundered into an adventure that may cost him dear, while from his own point of view his prestige would be irreparably injured if he were now to withdraw. France and Great Britain are concerned, not because they are morally outraged by the Italian policy, but because they fear Il Duce may send too many troops out of Europe and thus increase the likelihood of an attempt by Hitler to seize Austria. The British and French are helped in their plan to curb Mussolini's African ambitions by the weather: the rainy season, just beginning in Ethiopia, will make an active military campaign almost impossible until September.

THE bonus veto overshadowed other events in the domestic field during the past seven days. It was hoped that President Roosevelt's veto message, the first of its sort ever to be delivered by a President in person, would sufficiently arouse the country so that there would be no question of repassage despite his opposition. The Senate adopted the Wagner labor-disputes bill, which now seems likely to become law —an outcome for which President Roosevelt himself presumably deserves the lion's share of credit. The plan for renewal of the N.R.A. is encountering stormy weather, and the most for which the administration can now hope seems to be an extension for eighteen months, with price-fixing eliminated except as to minerals and other natural resources, and with codes confined to interstate business. Donald Richberg let it be known that he intends to return to private life not later than June 16, and other N.R.A. executives will follow his example. The A.A.A. pilgrimage to Washington, involving several thousand farmers, having been deemed a success is now being followed by a similar march of business men in support of the N.R.A.

WISCONSIN progressives heard Governor Philip La Follette of that state oppose the attempt to put a national new-party ticket in the field in 1936 and listened to a demand by Mayor LaGuardia of New York for a revision of the Constitution in the interest of the common man. The Toledo automobile strike ended with minor concessions made to the strikers, whose left wing charged that the American Federation of Labor had sold them out by permitting the continuance of a company union, and agreeing to elections supervised by the Automobile

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Labor Board; meanwhile, a bitter strike of lumbermen in the Pacific Northwest got under way. The holding-company bill was modified in Congress in directions that would take away much of its effectiveness. Details were announced for spending the first work-relief billion and President Roosevelt prescribed a series of no less than eighty different wage scales for various parts of the country and types of labor. As the Filipinos voted twenty-five to one for independence, there was evident in the United States a growing determination to keep the Islands under American control on the ground that they have suddenly become of new importance as part of the trans-Pacific aviation service.

IN SETTING scales for relief wages below prevailing wages, the President was undoubtedly moved by two arguments: first, that the lower the wages, the more persons could be employed on the given appropriation—which in any event is too small to care for all the unemployed—and second, that he expects private industry to revive and wants the relief workers to quit in order to accept jobs in private industry as rapidly as these jobs become available. Against these arguments there are other weighty ones. The lowest wage for unskilled labor is $19 a month, and from there it ranges to $55 in large cities of regions where prices are highest. No expert would maintain that a family can be supported without semi-starvation on from $4.75 to $13.75 a week. In a labor market where supply greatly exceeds demand, wages for private employment are certain to have a tendency to be lowered to those in public employment. The campaign of industrial interests against prevailing wages when the bill was before Congress is undoubtedly part of a general drive for wage reductions. Finally, there is no assurance whatever that private employment will expand while this relief program is operative. The result of the decision is likely to be great confusion and discontent. The difficulty goes back to the unplanned nature of the whole program. There should have been a sharp separation between public works and relief. Public works should have been planned to produce the most necessary things, and on a long-time schedule. On them employment at standard wages should have been offered in the regular way to anyone fitted, whether employed or not. There is almost no limit to the amount that could wisely be spent in this way. The remaining unemployed should have been cared for by a separate, expertly administered, permanent relief agency.

THE decision handed down by the Supreme Court in the Herndon case could hardly have been more discouraging. After the granting of a new trial to the Scottsboro boys, it was to be hoped—if not expected—that the Court would at least consider the Herndon case on its merits and return its decision accordingly. Instead, with only Justices Cardozo, Brandeis and Stone dissenting, the Court evaded the important principles at stake and dismissed Herndon's appeal on the tenuous technicality that he was tardy in asserting his constitutional rights in the Georgia courts and that the Supreme Court thus lacked jurisdiction. Herndon, therefore, must be sent back to Georgia to serve a twenty-year sentence for violating a Reconstruction statute against inciting insurrection. The Court, by upholding the conviction in the lower courts, has given tacit support and approval to all the reactionary forces striking at civil liberties in the United States. While this was not the intention of the decision, conceived in a legal vacuum undisturbed by any breath of outside air, it will most likely be its effect. The Court will probably be given another chance to consider the case, since a petition for rehearing will undoubtedly be filed. That the Court will grant this petition, however, after having denied all authority in the case, is unlikely. Once again we are forced to realize that a minor point of law is sometimes more important than the broad sweep of justice.

EMERGENCY action by Secretary Perkins seems called for in the case of John Ujich, who is scheduled for deportation to Italy on Friday, May 24. Ujich is a sincere and open anti-Fascist, and faces almost certain imprisonment—or worse—at the hands of Mussolini's cohorts if the sentence of deportation is carried out. Ujich has a long and honorable record as a worker in the lumber camps and shipyards of America's Northwest, and the question of his deportation was raised only after he had incurred the displeasure of local officialdom by his efforts on behalf of persons on the relief rolls in Tacoma, Washington. The American Committee for the Protection of Foreign Born has carried on a gallant fight for Ujich, but after a fruitless appeal to the Board of Review of the Labor Department, the only recourse now is Secretary Perkins herself. She has discretionary power in this case, and in the interests of humanitarian justice we hope she will exercise it.

RECENT events at Williams College indicate that Mr. Hearst is becoming concerned over the increasingly successful movement to boycott the Hearst-Metrotone newsreel at colleges and universities. Williams has been a leader in this movement, and when it became evident that the manager of the local theater was not to be threatened or bullied into showing the reel, a typical squadron of Hearst hirelings was dispatched to the campus from Boston. First appeared a reporter who usually covers State House news for the Hearst-controlled Boston American; a reporter for The Boston Record, a tabloid that does not admit Hearst ownership but uses the Hearst plant for technical purposes and carries the I.N.S. and other Hearst services; and a representative of the movie-distributing company. They were joined later by John T. Cushing, who is listed officially as owner and publisher of The Boston Record and is thought by many to be a representative of Hearst interests in New England

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despite his violent disclaimers, and William Oursler, Harvard undergraduate and son of the editor of Liberty. There ensued a typically Hearst campaign of attempts to dig up Red propaganda in the records or actions of students advocating the boycott; of investigations of the student newspaper that led the movement; of interviews with influential students, faculty members and officials; of offers to eliminate specific objectionable sequences; and of appeals to the local post of the American Legion. The net result of five days of high-pressure campaigning was precisely zero; the absolute boycott of the Hearst-Metrotone newsreel continues at Williams. Princeton and Amherst likewise have succeeded in completely banishing the reel, and the movement at other colleges constantly increases in scope and effectiveness. As for the Williamstown post of the American Legion, it not only ignored all pleas to support the newsreel, but calmly adopted resolutions opposing the teachers' oath bill, in spite of Hearst's screaming advocacy of the measure.

LITTLE has been heard lately in the American press about Cuba; but in this case, no news is bad news. Behind the veil of censorship, every device known to fascism in Germany or Italy is being employed. Enemies or suspected enemies of the Mendieta regime are being ruthlessly stamped out. Some of them, as in the old days of Machado, simply "disappear." Others are arrested and then "killed while trying to escape." In the prisons, the usual wretched conditions prevail; prisoners are tortured by being beaten, are given doses of castor oil, etc. The formal machinery of public education is almost at a standstill: it is estimated that 500,000 children now receive no schooling, and such universities as are open are subject to constant harassment. Fourteen people, twelve men and two women, arrested at the time that Dr. Antonio Guiteras was shot, will be court-martialed this week, with serious danger that, innocent or guilty, they will be executed as an example to "seditious elements." Meanwhile, many American newspapers have suddenly and curiously changed their tone regarding those Cubans who believe that in all its essentials, the Mendieta regime is only the Machado regime in thin disguise. Those who oppose Mendieta are now described as bandits whereas a few months ago they were heroes. What is it, one wonders, that turns a noble liberator into a criminal overnight?

THE Filipinos followed the expected course when they voted, twenty-five to one, in favor of the new "Commonwealth Constitution" under which they will obtain their freedom at the end of ten years. The only difference of opinion among them on the subject seems to be whether ten years is not too long a time; this was in part the basis for the recent uprising of the Sakdalistas, who feel that the ten-year period is only a device to fasten more firmly upon the Islands the chains of Wall Street ownership. The real peril to Philippine independence still comes from within the United States. The Islands have suddenly assumed a new commercial and military importance because they are part of the projected trans-Pacific aviation service, which utilizes Hawaii, Wake and Midway Islands, Guam and Manila on the route between San Francisco and Canton. It is obvious that aerial bases in the Pacific are just as important from the military as from the commercial point of view. For this reason suggestions are beginning to be heard that the Philippines must not be permitted to pass entirely out of American control and that their inhabitants ought to accept some sort of dominion status. It is even hinted that the delay in negotiating new commercial arrangements is intended to keep the Islands under our influence.

WORKERS in the lumber industry in the Pacific Northwest are on strike against the N.R.A. code provisions of a forty-hour week and a minimum wage of 42.5 cents. An estimated 35,000 workers have joined the strike and are demanding a thirty-hour week at a minimum pay of 75 cents an hour. They insist that the code provisions merely give government approval to established bad practices in the industry and in no wise represent adequate working conditions or compensation for so dangerous an occupation. The men are bitter against the speed-up system widely used in the camps in this region, which has taken a terrible toll in life and health. Among the features of this scheme for laying off men are the increase of the saw-speeds from 900 to 1,500 revolutions per minute; elimination of proper safeguards; and the forcing of the strongest workers to move cut timbers, eight inches square and thirty-two feet long, off the conveyor belt single-handed. Serious and sometimes fatal accidents are frequent under this system. The present strike is being led by A.F. of L. organizers, with strong rank-and-file support. The more militant workers hope this strike may see the final elimination of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, hitherto the prevailing organization in the field and so completely dominated by the owning interests that the workers say it isn't even a company union. They call it an employers' union.

DR. Rexford G. Tugwell, Under-secretary of Agriculture, made a speech in Albany, New York, a few days ago in the course of which he predicted that if we do not change our ways large parts of the Middle West will become desert in three hundred years. The news agencies promptly interviewed several people in the Middle West who scoffed at the idea. So far as we can learn, however, they asked no one who could be ranked as an expert on the question of soil erosion, the lowering of the water table and allied subjects. The reporters' chief authority seemed to be William Allen White, who is known for his geniality and for his success as an author and a small-town Republican publisher; if Bill White is an expert geographer, he has kept his light under a Kansas bushel all these years. The

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article by C. W. Collier in this issue of The New Republic shows how solid is the ground for Dr. Tugwell's prediction. The only reason it is unlikely to be fulfilled is that we are now beginning to apply our collective intelligence to the problem involved.

FROM an advertisement recently published, in many leading newspapers throughout the country:

> To anxiety—I bring relief.
> To distress—I bring courage.
> To achievement—I bring content.
> To loneliness—I bring companionship.

What bright boy or girl in the class can tell what it is that is advertised with these phrases? The Visiting Nurse Association? The Bible? The St. Bernard dogs, who frolic through the snows of Switzerland and rescue exhausted travelers? Not at all: this was an advertisement of Lucky Strike cigarettes. While copywriters are employed to compose this sort of thing, and printers to disseminate it to a waiting world, it ill behooves private business, we should say, to criticize even the most foolish and ill advised made-work project of the Relief Administration.

A New Party—the Program

IF WE are to have a new party to make a bid for national power, representing those who are not satisfied with the Roosevelt regime, and are even less willing to go back to his reactionary opposition, what should be its program? At the beginning it must be emphasized as strongly as possible that no genuine political party that hopes to win elections and exercise power can be expected to hold to a hard-and-fast doctrinal position. Minute discriminations, detailed platforms, are for debating societies or cloistered experts. Insistence on the importance of details is probably as responsible as anything else for the splits in the present radical movement and the inability of any of its factions to win wide popular following. The general character and direction of the program are the really important factors.

Such a party can find in the American tradition of democracy and equality the sources of its inspiration. In the course of our history equality, particularly the economic equality on which must be based political equality and personal rights, has been forgotten; and democracy in consequence has been reduced to minimum terms. We still have the right to vote for candidates for political office; this is the lever through which the party must hope to work. But beyond that, we have lost—indeed, for the most part, have never exercised—the right of democratic control of our economic life. Great industries and financial institutions are run like autocratic principalities; whenever the people through political machinery threaten to check or control them, all the resources of propaganda, and finally of constitutional protections of "liberty" through the judicial machinery, are brought into action to stop the advance. It is significant that the principal apostles of liberty—for instance, the American Liberty League—are today the defenders of private wealth. Liberty has been narrowed to mean liberty of the owners of private instruments of production to do what they like. Liberty must be redefined to mean the liberty of those who work for a living to enjoy the resources of the country. It must be based on a truly democratic and equalitarian regime. The essential way to win such liberty is for the workers to gain control of our economic institutions. Only so can they make democracy real and comprehensive, and through it establish equality. The chief political objective of a significant new party must therefore be to *transfer power* over the operation of industry and finance from a minority ruling class of private owners to the community. This objective may be expressed or only implied, but without it any political struggle will be irrelevant to the dominant issue of our times.

Along with this conception goes another that is a touchstone of political opinion. This is the belief that we are all, as human beings, members of a common family and sharers of the same fate, that we must work together if anything significant is to be accomplished. Those to whom this belief is repugnant are those who object even to such mild measures as being taxed for unemployment relief, who place their whole faith in individual, competitive achievement, who think that any rich man has a "right" to his "property," and that any social measure to diminish his wealth is "stealing." They are by temperament opposed to all collective institutions; they attribute social ills to foreigners or to Jews or to some other group of outsiders; they tend to think that everything will be all right if only government does nothing, except for them; they believe that workers are enjoying the beneficence of employers if they have jobs at all. It is impossible to argue with those who hold this attitude; their prejudice goes behind reason. A new party that appeals to the feeling of brotherhood and has a collectivist direction will necessarily lead away from individualism of this type.

We have emphasized these generalities at the beginning because it is customarily charged that any collectivist movement is, for one thing, "un-American," and, for another, crassly materialist in that it does not look beyond increasing the material welfare of the masses. On the contrary, such a movement expresses a very deep strain of the modern equalitarian philosophy that is particularly strong in American tradition, and rests upon one of the least material of the motives of men—the desire for companionship and mutuality, the urge to share effort and will. But there is a very concrete material content in the program as well. That is, of course, what must be the leading purpose of any such new party—to arrange industry so that it may produce the abundance it is technically capable of

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producing, and thus may provide material security for all.

Here also a general line, it seems to us, is clearly indicated. There are only three main policies open to those who want to render industry steadily productive, those who want it to serve the need of people for the means of life. One is the policy of leaving its ownership and administrative control largely in the hands of those who now own and control it, but attempting to influence their decisions through governmental regulation. Another is to split up that ownership and control so that there will be a much larger class of owners and controllers, the units of business will be small enough so that no one group can be powerful, and the competition among them may automatically produce a desirable result. The third is to transfer the ownership and control of large and important units to the community.

The first course is that followed in the main by the Roosevelt administration, and the results are what we see. The relevant observations concerning it are familiar, and there is no space here to elaborate on them. The practical results of this program are, by and large, either that the control is ineffective, being successfully defied by the interests concerned, or that they exercise sufficient power over the government to control the control, as in N.R.A. codes. In any event, whoever favors this course has no reason to want a new party. The second course is that of restoring a workable laissez-faire. This assumes, first, that there once was a workable laissez-faire; second, that it could be restored and preserved. It is reminiscent of the trust-busting 1890's, and of Wilson's New Freedom. It is, in our opinion, a definitely lost cause. All the arguments against regulation would apply to such an endeavor with redoubled force. The only other route is that toward collective ownership and management, with a view to establishing an eventual socialist economy. Opinions may differ as to how far and how fast this course ought to be, or can be, followed. But a new party that set out upon it would have a useful role to play.

Here one distinction is essential. A mere "government-ownership" program that intended to stop short with acquiring, say, the railroads and other public utilities, or even the natural-resource industries, would not do at all. Most of the common arguments against government ownership are, to be sure, without much substance; it is likely to be fully as efficient and as free from politics as private ownership. There is no reason in the world why a publicly owned corporation cannot hire as good administrators and experts as a privately owned one; many of them have done so. But merely to do as good a job, or even a slightly better one, in a few scattered industries would not have much bearing on the main economic objective. What we want is an economy planned to produce abundance. That implies an industrial system operating according to social plan, a plan that visualizes in advance the amount of production and employment, the wage policies and price policies, the interrelationships among industries and financial institutions. The very reason we need collective ownership is that private industry cannot and will not operate according to such a plan. The program must therefore contemplate, not mere control of scattered industries to be operated as private owners might operate them, but control of enough industries to make social planning effective. Provided this is implicit in the program, the actual procedure and extent of collectivism may safely be left to future determination.

Given this political and economic core, planks that are consistent with it may be added at will. Constitutional reform is undoubtedly necessary, since the courts have so interpreted the Constitution as to make it a bulwark of private capitalism. Social insurance that will actually provide security is a possibility, if we can produce the abundance to pay for the insurance. Taxation can be nicely fitted into the equalitarian economic aims, if it becomes a matter of spreading plenty rather than merely of trying for a more equal distribution of a total national income that is inadequate. At present there are grave difficulties in trying to use the government to improve the status of labor, whether through legislation establishing wage-and-hour standards or through safeguarding collective bargaining; these difficulties would be trifling if government were controlled by the working population. Much thought and discussion ought to go into the formation of such planks, but their detailed provisions are unimportant for the time being, if there is agreement on the essentials. With a main direction, the rest will follow.

Can a party with this sort of program be formed, and can it succeed? Discussion of these questions must be reserved for future issues.

Pioneers in 1935

AN INTERESTING experiment in modern pioneering is being sponsored by the Rural Rehabilitation division of the F.E.R.A. Sixty-seven families, forced on the relief rolls by steadfast but ultimately futile attempts to wrest a living from submarginal agricultural lands in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, last week reached their new homesteads in Alaska. It is planned to establish 200 families in the Matanuska Valley this first summer, and the project eventually is to include 800 families.

These people will live in log cabins, and will be brought face to face with the traditional problem of the American pioneer—the necessity for clearing the land before it can be cultivated. The government, however, is lending a hand and has sent out in advance of the settlers a force of 400 workers and artisans, organized on a C.C.C. basis to assist in the clearing of the land and the building

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of homes. During the first summer, both settlers and workers will be housed in tents, but by the time the work force departs in the fall, it is hoped that warm, weather-tight cabins for all the settlers will be built and ready for occupancy.

Each family will be alloted forty acres of land, along with a home, essential farm buildings, equipment and livestock. For this stake—the terminology of '98 comes naturally to mind—the government will charge the homesteader $3,000, with interest at three percent. Interest will be charged but not collected during the first four years and it will be prorated with the rest of the debt over the amortization period, which is thirty years. The first payment is not due until 1940, thus giving the settler a chance to get on his feet before he begins paying off his debt.

Agricultural prospects for the new settlement are said to be good. The government maintains an agricultural experimental station in the valley and its experience and advice will be available to the settlers. The country is reported to be good for dairying, and most of the hardier general crops can be grown there. The annual shipment of food into Alaska from the United States now totals more than $1,000,000, and it is expected that the settlers ultimately will supply a large proportion of this potential market. A creamery and a cannery are planned for the settlement and controlled cropping and marketing are contemplated to ensure a year-round supply of products at a fair profit.

While there are many favorable factors, as indicated, the government has made no attempt to minimize the hardships that must be faced. The winters are long and severe, the mercury sometimes going as low as forty below, and the summers are short. The daylight hours show wide variation, ranging from virtually twenty-four hours of daylight in June to virtually twenty-four hours of darkness in December. The Matanuska Valley lies 125 miles north of Seward, and while warm winds from the Japan current temper the climate, they also bring heavy rains in late summer which interfere with the curing of hay and other forage crops. Mosquitoes are an additional difficulty, and are present in large quantities from June through September.

Criticism of the project has been expressed by persons who doubt the economic feasibility of the plan and who think that better land, both on abandoned farms and in the public domain, is already available in continental United States, without going to Alaska. Mr. Cyrenus Cole, of Iowa, a former member of the House of Representatives, says that he and Henry C. Wallace, father of the present Secretary of Agriculture, were members of the party accompanying President Harding on the ill fated trip to Alaska in 1923 and they found the land in the Matanuska Valley rather poor, with only a thin layer of topsoil thawing long enough for cultivation. Mr. Cole quotes the elder Wallace—who then held the office his son holds now—as saying, "I hope I may never have to go there to follow a plow with a mosquito net over my head." One point not often mentioned in connection with the northern colonization is the increasing importance of Alaska in military and naval-defense plans of the United States and the government's desire to have some civil population in Alaska to support the large air bases that are planned for that region.

Families for the new project are taken from regions with a climate somewhat similar to that of Alaska, and the settlers are carefully chosen on a basis of general health, industry, responsibility and practical experience in farming. They are told that they are going a long way from familiar surroundings, with small chance of return, even for a visit, for a number of years, and that they will face the rigors of pioneer life in their new homes. That so many families are applying for homesteads under these conditions seems to refute the theory that people on the relief rolls are a shiftless, irresponsible lot who wouldn't work if you offered them a job.

Secret Government in Washington

A RECENT book, "Handout,"[1] raises the issue of government propaganda and censorship under Roosevelt. "Handout" itself is a bad-tempered little book, written with no more impartiality or balance of judgment than the Protocols of Zion, or "The President's Daughter." It contains inaccuracies on nearly every page. The name by which the book is signed, George Michael, is a pseudonym, and the author's identity is unknown. Nevertheless, the book's basic contention is sound. It maintains that much of the news coming from Washington is incomplete or misleading, and this is unquestionably true.

The chief accusations of the book are three. It declares that the administration, through the Federal Communications Commission, influences radio broadcasting; that, through the N.R.A. Motion Picture Code Authority, it influences the motion-picture industry; and that, through a great staff of propagandists in every government department, it colors and distorts the news printed in newspapers and magazines. The first two accusations, regarding the radio and the movies, have been made many times before. The author of "Handout" angrily criticizes the recent appointment of John Boettiger, Roosevelt's son-in-law, to an executive post in the motion-picture producers' trade association, and this criticism is legitimate. It is a long established principle that a President should not be placed in a position of seeming to have a special relationship to a private business group. This same principle, incidentally, applies equally to the case of Roosevelt's son, Elliott, now employed by the trade association of the airplane industry.

[1] Handout, by George Michael. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 242 pages. $2.

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However, the third of "Handout's" accusations, that news emanating from Washington often is not reliable, is the most worthy of attention. The making of government propaganda, in itself, is nothing new. The prosperity-around-the-corner stories of the Hoover administration were attempts to spread false news for political advantage. But, under the Roosevelt administration, the potential harmfulness of government propaganda is unquestionably greater than ever before. As a result of the shock of the depression, we are in the midst of making comparatively important changes in the country's economic and political structure. Without full, accurate information from Washington, public opinion has no chance of intelligently guiding these changes.

A few examples will make this clear. The country is prepared to adopt a new farm policy. An essential part of this policy concerns the marketing agreements to be established between farmers and the processors and distributors of food. It is known that A.A.A. officials have conducted long, difficult negotiations with the canners and packers. What occurred in these negotiations? What did the A.A.A. officials say, what did the canners and packers reply, and where and when? A.A.A. handouts do not tell us. The effort of a few junior officials to tell the facts about these negotiations was, in part, the cause of the recent A.A.A. "purge."

A similar hush-hush atmosphere obtains in the N.R.A. General Johnson promised that the N.R.A. codes would be written in a goldfish bowl. But it is known that essential clauses of a number of codes were written in Washington hotel rooms, behind locked and guarded doors. It is also known that unwritten agreements were entered into between the administration and certain industries, by which concessions on hours and wages were matched against concessions on trade practices. In the case of the automobile industry, for example, it now seems evident that secret commitments were made by Mr. Roosevelt concerning unionization in the industry. What were these commitments? N.R.A. handouts do not tell, and N.R.A. officials are forbidden to tell.

Last autumn the President held a series of conferences with leaders of banking and industry. What pledges did these bankers and industrialists receive and give? What was the cause of the bitterness displayed both by Mr. Roosevelt and by business during the recent meeting of the United States Chamber of Commerce? Did one side or the other believe these pledges had been violated? The public can only guess. But what seems entirely clear is that important national policies are being considered, and adopted, in secret.

It must be recognized that newspapers cannot be depended upon to ferret out news that the administration and business are trying to suppress. A generation ago there were still newspaper owners who were little independent sovereigns, free from entangling alliances. Joseph Pulitzer, perhaps the last of them, could spend several hundred thousand dollars in the effort to find evidence of an agreement between Theodore Roosevelt and New York bankers concerning the Panama Canal. Nowadays, few newspaper owners are willing to spend great sums for news, or willing to fight a President and powerful business interests. Symptomatic of the fact that large numbers of people are ceasing to depend upon newspapers for the truth about Washington is the mushroom growth of confidential Washington news letters—most of which, it must be said, are no more informative, and much less accurate, than newspapers.

The author of "Handout" ascribes the propaganda and censorship prevailing in Washington to the personal malevolence of Roosevelt and his advisers, which is, of course, grotesque. Basically, the reason is simply that Roosevelt has no organized political opposition. Neither Roosevelt, nor the head of any state, will voluntarily publish his mistakes and failures. To hope for that is to hope for superhuman humility. The exposure of secret misdeeds is the business of the opposition in Congress. This function the Republican party is hopelessly incapable of performing. In the hearings before the Senate last month on the extension of the N.R.A., the only searching questions asked were those of La Follette and Costigan. Belonging historically to the party of big business, the Republicans could not demand explanations for the N.R.A.'s failure to enforce Section 7a, and to prevent price pyramiding. Similarly, they cannot attack the A.A.A.'s reluctance to come to grips with the problem of the packers, canners and milk distributors. The liberals of the Senate, like La Follette, Costigan, Norris, Wagner and Bone, are still, in varying degrees, committed to the Roosevelt program, and are in any case too few in number to form an effective opposition group. The same thing is true of the liberals of the House. Until a genuine left opposition arises in Congress, handouts will flourish in Washington, and the administration that is in power will be able to act in secret with impunity.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1935, IN THE U. S., BY THE NEW REPUBLIC, INC., 40 EAST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY. BRUCE BLIVEN, PRESIDENT, DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER.

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Roosevelt's Tree Army: I

HENCEFORTH, the C.C.C. is to have an enrolment of 600,000 boys at a time, double the present number. This means that perhaps one-third of the depression youth is to pass through C.C.C. camps. Created overnight, the C.C.C. is on its way to be an institution of immense social importance.

The C.C.C.'s original objectives were, first, to prevent the nation's male youth from becoming semi-criminal hitch-hikers and, second, to make possible conservation work on a grand scale. In these aims it has succeeded. It has kept boys off street corners and out of hobo jungles along automobile trunk roads. It has been a godsend to boys who, because of the depression, have not had enough to eat. Recently the writer talked with a shy, blond boy from a rural slum, the skin of whose arms and legs was blackened and cracked from malnutrition. A few days in camp, and the boy had gained five pounds, his skin was healing and he was happy as a cricket. The War Department estimates that the average gain in weight among the boys has been eight pounds.

Experts say that, as a result of the C.C.C., conservation work in America has been advanced by twenty years. The bare replacement value of projects completed by the C.C.C. is put at $335,000,000. Forests on government and state-owned land have been dotted with observation posts, connected by telephone and crisscrossed by roads and trails, so that fires, once detected, can be quickly reached. The C.C.C. has made the first serious effort to deal with soil erosion and, throughout the Middle West, temporary check dams have been built to retain surface water. Around Norris Dam, where the boys have had the use of machinery belonging to the T.V.A., their soil-erosion work has been extremely elaborate. They have also planted many millions of young trees—the jobs from which their nickname, Roosevelt's Tree Army, comes. They have fought the pine-twig blight and the Dutch-elm disease, restored Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields, wiped out mosquito plague spots in the South, and done many other useful jobs. To cite figures, up to April 1, the boys had spent 15,000,000 man-days fighting forest fires, built 50,000 miles of forest roads and trails, strung 25,000 miles of telephone wire, constructed 800,000 erosion dams, excavated 3,000 wells, planted 236,000 acres of tree seedlings and dug 1,200,000 yards of mosquito-control ditching.

Necessarily, for most boys, the camps form a training school in adult social behavior. In this part of its task, the C.C.C. has only partially succeeded. Many camps have done well with their boys, but a substantial minority of camps have tended to become small, mutinous prisons, in which the social attitudes acquired by the boys have been altogether bad. Primarily, this has been due to the weakness of the C.C.C.'s central organization. Nominally the C.C.C.'s head is Robert Fechner, whose office is supposed to be a coördinating agency for the War Department, which furnishes the camp commanders; the Office of Education, which furnishes the camp educational advisers; and the Interior and Agriculture Departments, which furnish the experts who direct conservation work. In practice, however, supervision over the camp lies with the commanders of the nine army-corps areas. These corps-area commanders are conscientious enough about the physical health of the camps—in inspecting water supplies and latrines—but, for the most part, they have neither time nor desire to worry about the camps' social atmosphere, as expressed in the boys' recreational and educational activities. Probably it is fair to say that, in the army, the C.C.C. is regarded as an unwelcome chore, outside the proper interests of professional fighting men.

Fechner himself has no way of estimating conditions in the 1,600—soon to be 2,900—C.C.C. camps, except through personal visits, and through his nine investigators, one in each corps area. An old-time union official, and vice-president of the International Machinists, Fechner has been greatly concerned to see that all construction work is done by union labor, and his nine investigators have been kept busy checking up on contractors. For his knowledge of individual camps, he has had to rely on the corps-area commanders. The more serious weakness in the C.C.C. organization, however, has come from the long feud between Fechner and the C.C.C. educational director, Dr. C. S. Marsh, which will be discussed in a succeeding article.

The result of the War Department's indifference, and the friction between Fechner and Marsh, has been to throw great responsibility on the camp commanders. When the C.C.C. was first established, camp commanders were all regular army officers. During the last year, reserve officers have been substituted in all camps except that at Warm Springs, Georgia. This camp is regularly visited by Roosevelt, and the War Department, which thinks of everything, keeps a regular army officer at its head. The reserve officers all belong to the college unemployed, the group that has suffered most from loss of self-esteem and unaccustomed hardship. Most of them regard their jobs in the C.C.C. as a stopgap to better times that are disappointingly slow in coming. It is to their credit that they have been able to show the enthusiasm and initiative they have.

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A camp in the Eastern part of the country in which a food riot lately occurred illustrates, however, the sort of situation that is possible under the present lack of centralized supervision. In this camp, the boys refused to eat, knocked the company commander's assistant down, kicked him and sent him to the camp infirmary with painful injuries. The company commander in this camp is a man in his thirties, and has been a year in the C.C.C. In his first camp, in the West, he showed great enthusiasm. He organized a band, and took it to play at outside dances until the organized musicians of the state justifiably complained and forced him to stop. With his assignment to his present camp, however, his enthusiasm died. He has a wife and two half-grown children, and he began to worry over his future. Although he had liked the boys in the first camp, in his second camp he began to hate them. The boys, quick as wild animals to sense an older person's real feelings, grew uneasy, restive, and the food riot and the beating of the company commander's assistant followed.

The result of this superficially trivial incident has been extremely bad. The camp resembles a jail, and social behavior appropriate to a jail, toadying, malingering, wreaking petty revenges, is being inculcated in the boys. The camp's recreational and educational activities have lost all life. The company commander is bitter about the boys, but does not dare relieve his bitterness by discharging the leaders, since he fears an investigation by the corps-area headquarters that might cost him his job, which he needs. This situation may easily run on for weeks. The gravest accusation against the C.C.C. is that it has no specialized machinery for uncovering cases like these and correcting them.

It should be repeated that a majority of camps have done well with the boys. Probably the best camps are those with enrollee self-government—enrollee is the C.C.C. term for enlisted men. Many other camps have enrollee councils and camp forums. Such devices, giving the boys responsibility for their own social actions, are evidences of a good camp. They are unworkable except where camp commander and boys trust and like one another. These camps are the ones with baseball squads, camp newspapers, dramatic companies, weekly movie nights and fortnightly dances. Along with this successful majority of camps, however, must be recognized an unsuccessful and morbid minority. The size of this minority can be gauged from the C.C.C.'s estimate that it has had a 20-percent turnover in company commanders. This is another way of saying that a fifth of the company commanders appointed have been so conspicuously unfit that it has been necessary to discharge them. It is also revealing that, while the physical health of the boys has been extremely good, cases of mental breakdown have been unexpectedly high. In March, 1934, a special order was issued rigidly to exclude all boys with histories of mental or emotional instability from the C.C.C., before their difficulties are likely to be increased, rather than improved." A few C.C.C. disasters have attracted national attention, notably the killing of Lieutenant J. L. Gatlin at Pine Valley, Oklahoma, and the riots at Bear River, California, West Orange, New Jersey, and in the Worcester, Massachusetts, railroad station.

One of the greatest handicaps of the C.C.C. has been the meagerness of its equipment. Many camps cost less than $20,000 apiece, and this sum covered company commander's home, infirmary, barracks and mess hall. At the start, for athletic equipment each camp of two hundred boys received four horseshoe-throwing sets, two volley-ball sets, four sets of boxing gloves, and bats, balls and gloves for two baseball teams. For educational material, a camp was given six sheets of writing paper and two envelopes per man per week, a set of army and navy hymnals, a dictionary and half a dozen Spalding athletic handbooks, and the right to share with other camps in the use of a traveling library of detective stories.

In practice, the equipment of the camps has depended chiefly on the enthusiasm and enterprise of camp commanders. Good camp commanders have made friends of leading citizens in neighboring towns and begged athletic equipment, musical instruments, books, magazines, drawing materials, tools, material for window curtains, grass seed, the use of a printing press for a camp newspaper—almost anything. For absolute necessities, camp commanders have the right to ask for additional funds from their corps-area headquarters, but a majority of them have relied on their own wits. The writer knows one camp commander who, when the barracks roof leaked, bargained with a neighboring farmer for a carload of potatoes at far below the prevailing market price, and with the money saved on his potatoes, hired local carpenters at scab rates to repair the roof. "I've broken every rule of the C.C.C.," he said, "but my boys sleep dry."

In the original camps, the only place the boys had to sit in during the evenings was the mess hall, usually a long, narrow enclosed shed, without partitions. If a few boys wished to study, the rest had to keep silent; if a few wanted to play games, there could be no studying. The mess halls were lighted by weak, unshaded bulbs along the ridgepole, which made reading extremely tiring. The test of camp, therefore, rapidly came to be the ability of camp commander and boys somehow to improvise tools and materials for the building of a proper recreational hall—rec hall, in C.C.C. language. Immense ingenuity has been displayed by certain camps; some of the rec halls represent little less community effort than do the Gothic cathedrals. In a recent issue of the national C.C.C. newspaper, Happy Days, the Willow Springs, Missouri, camp boasts of the first C.C.C. system of indirect lighting, the lights on the side walls of its new school building "being shaded by one-half of an ordinary wooden chopping bowl." The account continues: "The four center lights are

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also shaded from the underside by wooden bowls. A swell table lamp is on the reading table for the use of the mechanical-drawing class."

In camps in which the company commander has lacked resourcefulness the boys have suffered greatly from the poverty of the camp equipment. The satisfying of such a vital need as a recreational hall ought not to be left to chance and pioneering instinct of a company commander. A thousand dollars spent on each camp would make an immense difference. For 2,900 camps, that would mean an expenditure of $2,900,000. With a third of the nation's youth entering the C.C.C., this does not seem a profligate sum. JONATHAN MITCHELL.

This is the first of two articles by Jonathan Mitchell. The second will appear in an early issue.—THE EDITORS.

Is France Back to Normal?

The following article was written before the recent municipal elections in France. In these elections the growing discontent of the French people with the Flandin government, as noted by Mr. Werth, was reflected in the important victories won by the Communists and Socialists, uniting on an anti-Fascist front, throughout the country. In Paris the Communists increased the number of their Municipal Council deputies from one to eight and their candidates for mayor in Malakoff and Gentilly were reëlected by substantial majorities. In the Department of the Seine and Oise, some twenty municipalities were won by the Socialists and Communists, as were the towns of St. Etienne, Mulhausen and Berigueux. It appears, also, that the city of Lyons was won by the united front as well as the mayoralties of twelve other cities and towns. Of the 855 towns of more than 5,000 population, Radical Socialists won control of 221, Socialists of 168, Left Republicans of 145, Republic Democrats of 99 and Communists of 90. The number of towns won by the Socialists and Communists is 258 as compared with a total of 465 won by the three conservative parties.—THE EDITORS.

WHEN, ON November 8, M. Flandin formed his Coalition Government barely twelve hours after the resignation of M. Gaston Doumergue, all those who had begun to despair of the French Republic heaved a sigh of relief. It looked as though France had at last gone back to normal again. Although M. Doumergue had served a good purpose immediately after the February riots, he had become, during the last months of his government, the center and source of fierce political quarrels and controversies. His presence at the head of the government threatened to intensify and to prolong indefinitely the political unrest from which France had suffered, almost uninterruptedly, since October, 1933. If the "party truce" that M. Doumergue had proclaimed in February did not bring peace to France, it was mainly his own fault. Far from being an arbiter, Doumergue gradually became a violent partisan, who supported one part of his Cabinet (and of public opinion) against the other. In October all good political observers could see that if the French Republic was to be saved from endless trouble, he had better depart.

"The Savior of France."—He had then held office for nearly nine months—acclaimed as the "savior of France." Many good democrats hailed him as the least of all possible evils. There were some who said that the Poincaré "miracle" of 1926 had been repeated, and that, when things became very bad, the good old Third Republic never failed to pull herself together.

It is true that he did not begin too badly. He declared that he was a sincere republican, and if the deputies behaved like good little boys, all would be well. Except for the Socialists and Communists, to whom he took an immediate dislike, he treated the rest of the deputies with fatherly condescension, and, remembering February 6, they ate out of his hand. He got them to pass all sorts of unpopular financial measures, only—and this is significant—whenever they showed the slightest sign of resistance, he threatened to return to his country home, and they could then face another fascist riot. And after that second riot he wouldn't be there any longer to save them and the Republic.

This little game of blackmail went on for a long time; but by the laws of politics it could not go on indefinitely. At the end of September Doumergue announced on the radio a program of constitutional reform, which, he said, was indispensable if the Republic was to continue. He also said that the National Assembly would meet at Versailles later in the year in order to approve this program. In terms of this reform the Premier would have the right to dissolve the Chamber at his personal discretion, and without the approval of the Senate. The Civil Servants would no longer have the right to strike (a measure directed against the Socialists and Communists). There were also other proposals tending to improve parliamentary procedure. A great conflict arose over the first proposal; and it arose within the government itself. The Radicals thought it too drastic. They said that they had every faith in Doumergue's sincere republicanism; only, in less scrupulous hands,

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they respectfully remarked, the law might lead to dangerous abuses and Napoleonic experiments. They tried to compromise; but in vain. Before long the Radicals realized that, egged on by his own advisers, Doumergue was almost as dangerous as any of his imaginary successors.

Fascist's End.—Then, favored by the general public's lack of interest in Doumergue's constitutional reforms, the Radicals called the Fascist bluff, and broke up the National Government. There was no riot (for a successful riot required the support of at least an important part of public opinion), and on November 8 Doumergue resigned, uttering terrible threats and imprecations, and treating his Radical Cabinet colleagues as "the assassins of February 6." Three days later, on Armistice Day, the retired Premier was acclaimed as their hero by the Croix de Feu, the Jeunesses Patriotes and the other Fascist organizations. They treated him as the savior of France, who had fallen a victim to the politicians; but the day would come when they (the Fascists) would bring him back again to save France for a second time. And Colonel de la Rocque, the Führer of the Croix de Feu, declared (what a confession!) that he and Doumergue had been in constant touch for a long time and that they would continue to keep in touch.

But in the meantime it happened that a new government had been formed by M. Flandin; and after the failure of the Fascist Leagues to enforce Doumergue's will on Parliament, the latter naturally welcomed Flandin's Cabinet as "a genuinely republican government." Everything being relative, even the Socialists and Communists were glad. Flandin, leader of the principal Center group and president of the Alliance Démocratique—for years also a bitter rival of Tardieu's—was bred in the tradition of progressive bourgeois republicanism. Without denying that they leave room for improvement, he believes in democracy and in liberal capitalism—though with regard to the latter, he holds that exceptional circumstances call for exceptional remedies. In times of crisis he admits, for instance, the principle of a mild control of production.

The French Are Grumblers.—The Flandin government has now been in power for several months. It is a "National" government stretching from the Right to the Radicals, inclusive, and its majority in Parliament has, at times, been larger than that of any other Cabinet since the War. Although it does not constitute a coherent combination, it is less incoherent than Doumergue's; for all its members, including its Right members, are constitutionalists. M. Flandin's government has put aside the more drastic constitutional reforms proposed by M. Doumergue, and, realizing that the country as a whole was more interested in its economic troubles than in any improvements of the Constitution, it decided from the start to concentrate on economic reforms. The Frenchman is by nature a grumbler, and he takes his economic ills with bad grace; today this grumbling is more justified than it has ever been since the War. There is a deep slump in agriculture; there is unemployment in the towns, which by the end of January reached the record figure of nearly 500,000. These are "registered" unemployed, that is, those in receipt of relief; the actual number of unemployed is at least twice as high. The tourist trade is in a desperate plight. In short, the discontent is very widespread, and, in spite of all the deflationary measures taken during the past two years, a heavy budget deficit (estimated by M. Caillaux at 6,000,000,000 francs for 1935, or at 11,000,000,000, if the railway deficits and other state burdens are included) continues to reflect the depression. In many respects the crisis is becoming even worse than before. There are now in France some eloquent partisans of devaluation—but the general public, remembering the last inflation, is still horrified at the idea of reducing the 20-percent franc to an ever lower fraction.

As everyone is well aware, the task of putting France on her feet again is not an easy one; but the Flandin government has at least made some attempts at economic restoration. Its policy—incorporated in two recent laws—of buying up the surplus wheat and surplus wine in order to raise the wholesale prices of these two commodities may, in time, achieve the desired result, though this result was not so prompt as M. Flandin may have expected. Flandin also hopes to revive trade, to make money cheaper and to reduce unemployment, without tampering with the gold currency. It is a slow and heartbreaking job, and the country is, naturally, impatient. It is difficult to say whether he will succeed.

The Right and the Left.—The mere threat of more trouble in Parliament can only play into the hands of the Fascist Leagues. For a long time after their fiasco of November 8 little was heard of them; but as the position of the Flandin government became more shaky, and as the anniversary of February 6, "the day of awakening," approached, they became more active again. In one night the Croix de Feu filled the four largest halls in Paris with their supporters—a quadruple gathering that was meant to show that they were still going strong—and, though hampered by police restrictions, all the Leagues commemorated February 6. There was also a requiem service at Notre Dame in memory of "the martyrs of February 6"—which, much to the annoyance of the Socialists and Radicals, M. Flandin attended in person. (Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, for him, his "unrepublican" behavior was but poorly rewarded by the Fascists and Royalists, one of whom came forward and called him an "ignoble individual.") None the less, the Left were annoyed with him for having given an "official character" to the Fascist ceremony. He partly made up for it by allowing the Reds to commemorate the men killed

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in the Communist riot of February 9, 1934, by laying flowers on the statue of the Republic in the Place de la Republique. But this "fair play to the Red Flag" on the part of the government annoyed, in turn, the Fascists and reactionaries. Speaking objectively, nothing could have been more sensible than M. Flandin's behavior on these two occasions; but Paris opinion is so touchy that in the end M. Flandin made himself, if not totally, at least partially, unpopular with both Left and Right.

For another decline in governmental authority, coupled with the general economic discontent, can only help the Fascist Leagues. Although they suffered a serious setback in November, they are still there, and with 30,000 or 40,000 men ready to "march on the Chamber," they may still play a part in a moment of great political bewilderment. If the Flandin government is given a fair chance by the Chamber, and if there is at least a slight economic improvement (even if it is only in Paris, for in the provinces the Fascists have made no headway yet), these Fascist Leagues should lose most of the strength and authority they gained since the day of awakening a year ago. The Socialist and Radical proposal to take drastic action against them —to disarm and dissolve them—seems an unfortunate one; for, without being a practical proposition, it can only give the Leagues a great deal of free publicity. The Chamber had better help to strengthen the authority of the government, and leave the Leagues alone till they die a natural death.

But at the moment they are still alive; and considering the other difficulties with which the government is faced, one would be rash to conclude that French democracy is safe, and that the Third Republic is already back to normal. It has turned some bad corners, but there are others ahead.

Paris. ALEXANDER WERTH.

At Last—A Soil Erosion Program

ACCORDING to the "Antiochicus" of Libanius, Antioch's most loyal citizen, the City of Antioch in the year 360 A.D. was the center of an almost Arcadia-like region. The population probably exceeded 400,000. All natural resources, we are told, were poured out liberally for the benefit of Antioch. The earth, the streams and a temperate climate vied with each other in making the district fertile. The cultivated land was luxuriant with olives and golden corn. The heights of the mountains were covered with timber and furnished a perennial water supply. Vineyards abounded. The export of agricultural produce was a flourishing trade. Today the formerly rich highlands lie devastated and abandoned. The population has been reduced to less than 28,000. The mountains are denuded of forest and soil, and during the rainy season contribute torrential floods to rivers that no longer flow clear and are frequently dry. "Arcadia" has been changed to "Desolation."

While wars and earthquakes were partially responsible for the original decline of this once prosperous region, the disastrous transformation is fundamentally attributable to uncontrolled soil erosion caused by neglect and misuse of the land. Such destruction by man of his fertile and productive environment has not been limited to Antioch. History is filled with similar tragic changes. All through northern Africa, Asia Minor and Mongolia are found the records of once prosperous regions whose abandonment, it is believed, was in large measure due to the denudation of forests, overgrazing of pasture lands or improper methods of cultivation, ending in severe erosion, desiccation and desert conditions. The process has not been confined to ancient times. It is going on today in Africa, in China, Italy, Puerto Rico and many other countries.

One of the most serious conditions of erosion is found in the United States. Of all the nations of the world, either ancient or modern, ours has probably been the greatest despoiler of natural resources. From the date of first settlement, there is a continuous record of wanton waste and destruction. Today our forest resources on private lands are rapidly approaching depletion. Our agricultural lands are in equally serious condition. Already more than 50,000,000 acres of such lands have passed into a virtually uncultivable condition. An additional 125,000,000 acres, most of which are still in cultivation, have been largely stripped of productive topsoil, with a resultant decline in productivity ranging up to 90 percent. Within the next fifty to seventy-five years, at least 100,000,000 acres of the remaining valuable agricultural areas will become severely impoverished through erosion if they are not adequately protected. This process of progressive impoverishment, if permitted to continue unchecked, will eventually reduce the fertile area of agricultural land to not more than 150,000,000 acres, as compared with the present area of about 450,000,000 acres. Such a small productive area might easily prove to be insufficient for the maintenance of an adequate national standard of living.

Conditions are no less serious on great areas of the Western grazing lands. Once fertile regions are rapidly approaching depletion through overgrazing and erosion. The land is becoming desiccated through increased runoff of rainfall. Water tables are being lowered. Destructive wind erosion is prevalent. In certain areas, sand dunes are rolling across as yet fertile districts. Many localities are headed toward uninhabitable desert conditions.

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In many parts of the United States, floods are increasing in frequency and destructiveness, due to denuded and eroded watershed conditions. Vast quantities of silt, originating from eroded lands, are being deposited in a multitude of reservoirs, threatening the agricultural and power resources dependent thereon. Thus, for example, the great Elephant Butte Irrigation Reservoir, which was originally built for a life of two hundred and twenty years, is silting so rapidly that abandonment of irrigated lands will begin within sixty years, this estimate being based on the present rate of silting. Since silting increases in parallel with the progress of erosion on the watershed, the life of this reservoir may be even shorter. There is no reason to assume that the life of Boulder Dam, the Tennessee Valley dams and other great reservoirs will not fall equally below man's intentions.

The most conservative estimates, such as leave out of consideration flood damage and the costly problem of silting of reservoirs and streams, the losses incurred through the creation of impoverished and stranded farm populations, and the possible future value of lands already destroyed or impoverished, indicate that the annual loss from erosion amounts to at least $400,000,000. This loss already totals not less than $10,000,000,000. Unless the evil is effectively curbed, the possible future costs of erosion are equally gigantic. The annual $400,000,000 direct loss will, within fifty years, accumulate to not less than $20,000,000,000. To this would have to be added the values of: (1) Great reservoirs clogged with the products of erosion; (2) the abandonment of irrigated areas dependent on such reservoirs; (3) the virtual abandonment of large agricultural sections; (4) the economic devastation of large Western areas dependent upon grazing; and (5) transfer to relief rolls or other pursuits of tremendous farm populations.

In brief, American civilization is in the process of destroying itself through the devastation of its environment. The threat is not one that can be met five hundred years from now. It must be met by this generation and its children. In ultimate importance, the problem may well transcend all others, for any scheme of social and economic reform must eventually fail if destruction should overtake natural resources upon which existence depends.

To meet the menacing situation, the administration, in 1933, launched the first broadly conceived and widespread practical program ever undertaken in the United States for permanent protection of its land resources. This program had its origin in the Soil Erosion Service of the Department of the Interior and was financed during the first year and a half with allotments aggregating $14,000,000 from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. During this early stage of the program, experimental and research work in erosion control was being carried on by several old-line bureaus of the Department of Agriculture.

In order better to correlate the various federal activities pertaining to erosion and its control, the Soil Erosion Service in April, 1935, was transferred lock, stock and barrel to the Department of Agriculture. Its title has been changed to the Soil Conservation Service, and it has been put in charge of all governmental efforts dealing with soil erosion. Funds for prosecution of this unified program will be made available from the administration's $4,800,000,000 work-relief bill, recently enacted.

The demonstration procedure originated by the Soil Erosion Service and to be continued by the Soil Conservation Service involves the establishment of a series of demonstration watershed projects, located in strategic regions. Forty of these projects have already been set up, ranging in area from 10 to 24,500 square miles. On each there is being put into effect a completely coördinated and integrated land-utilization program designed permanently to maintain agricultural productivity and to protect the entire area from erosion and other forms of soil depletion. Each watershed is treated as a geographic unit under methods that not only preserve the land but also greatly reduce, and in some cases largely eliminate, destructive floods and silting of stream channels and reservoirs through the prevention of these evils at their source.

Each project is directed by a competent staff of erosion experts, soils experts, agricultural engineers, foresters, agronomists and other specialists, who make careful studies and surveys of all physical climatic, agricultural and economic factors involved. On the basis of these studies, comprehensive land-utilization plans are prepared and incorporated into coöperative agreements between the government and the landowners. The agreements require that the landowners modify their land-utilization practices to accord with the plans of the Soil Conservation Service and that they donate all available labor and materials. The government, in its turn, undertakes to assist the landowner through the contribution of technical supervision and such labor and materials as the owner is unable to obtain.

Measures being applied under the soil-erosion program include a well balanced application of such efforts as the retirement of erosive marginal lands from cultivation and planting to pasture or trees; terracing; strip cropping, the check-damming and planting of gullies; the establishment of soil-conserving crop-rotation systems; the development of wild-life resources and community game-management districts to furnish supplemental income from lands retired from cultivation; the improvement of timber stands to provide for profitable sustained yield management on individual farms; the working out of properly balanced and diversified cropping systems which increase the standard of living of the farmers concerned; and the development of community fire-control organizations.

An effort is being made to organize the coöperating farmers for unified community action. Plans are

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being prepared for the purchase of those submarginal areas which cannot be successfully operated under private ownership, to be transformed into communal pastures and forests that will be managed under sustained yield plans such as are applied in European community forests. Economic studies are in progress covering each watershed, the results of which will be used in determining best methods of procedure, and to discover what effect soil erosion and the program for its control have had and will have on conditions within the regions where work is being done.

The plan of procedure is not one of employing a single uncoördinated implement of attack, but rather is one wherein all practical measures of erosion control (which involves the control of run-off by increasing the absorption of rainfall) are utilized in a coördinated, correct land-use program. This is not an agronomic program, or a soils, forestry or engineering program, but a program employing all of these measures in accordance with the needs and adaptability of every acre of land, so coördinated that the integrated activities will support one another in the complete control of the erosion, flood, silting and agricultural problems of entire watersheds. The work of the Soil Conservation Service is as yet confined to the conduct of experimental and demonstrational watershed projects, with the exception of considerable widespread control work on Indian reservations and the Public Domain. If expanded with a view to controlling erosion on a nationwide basis, the program would probably have to provide for an equitable distribution of the cost among the federal government, the states and their political subdivisions. It has been roughly estimated that this type of undertaking, designed to stabilize all of the man-induced erosion in the United States, might cost the federal government in the neighborhood of $3,000,000,000 if carried out over a period of thirty years. An annual expenditure of approximately $100,000,000 might be involved. Such a program would result in at least the partial elimination of unrestrained or surplus crop production through the removal from cultivation of large areas of highly erosive land. It would decrease the average cost of agricultural production by eliminating unprofitable areas. It would permanently protect agricultural lands from man-induced accelerated erosion; would rehabilitate many of the once fertile grazing areas of the West; would protect our great reservoirs from premature silting; and would largely reduce or even prevent destructive floods.

For the program just described, an expenditure of $100,000,000 a year seems slight indeed. That the estimated cost is comparatively small becomes immediately apparent when we consider the fact that between the years 1920 and 1930 alone, approximately $15,000,000,000 was spent on the construction of highways, and since 1860 nearly $60,000,000,000 has been spent in connection with wars.

CHARLES W. COLLIER.

Somewhere in Montana

IF YOU have never been in the badlands I cannot make you see the country. It looks like something visioned in a nightmare. Naked buttes fringe little valleys in which lie small tilled fields. So few people live here that there is much waste land. The land is covered with a short growth of grass. The grotesquely shaped hills are gray. The grass is yellow-gray. Wild horses graze in wandering herds. Cattle drift about in search of water and food. Canyons loom between the hills. A man walking would seem like something lost. Distance is so great, space is so vast.

Crops have failed here for five years now and conditions are worse than ever before. Relief, poorly administered, is not enough. Families run out of food long before the next monthly distribution is due. They use their credit to the limit and cannot pay their bills with their relief funds. Men are forced to steal to get enough to eat. Prices are high and getting higher all the time. Potatoes are $2.25 per hundred, flour $4.25, lard 20 cents a pound. A family of five on relief gets $30 a month —about one-third of what they really need. It is fifty miles from where we live to where the relief funds are distributed. There are times when the snow is so deep that one cannot get out of here even with a team. Horses that have no feed cannot drag a sled through the drifts.

We hear so much about a wheat surplus. No one can get wheat here and this is a wheat-producing country. A feed loan is being made monthly to people who can qualify, but the silly classification put many of us outside the bounds of possible borrowing. My husband, owning no stock except his work horses, is classified as a rancher, but he could not get a feed loan because he did not own enough stock to make up the amount necessary to qualify as a rancher.

One man, a neighbor of ours, went into the relief office a few days ahead of the date set for his visit. He was out of food and his wife and children were hungry. They could not find his number in the office. He had borrowed a car in which to make the trip. They told him to use his gasoline money to buy food.

Dead sheep have been in the coulees out here by hundreds and thousands. In only one instance, to my knowledge, was any of the meat of the slaughtered animals given to the poor. Cattle were also killed and the meat wasted, burned within sight of many people who were hungry. Of the canned beef supposed to be given to the poor I have seen three cans in the families of my married children and it was of very poor quality.

None of this applies to me except the feed-loan business. I can buy on credit, if I would, but I hate to go into debt when I cannot see how I am going to pay. My husband usually has hay to sell to help out with the living expenses, a couple of tons or so,

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but last fall he had no hay nor anything else to sell. My married children are getting relief. We have tried hard to keep off of relief rolls, but during this last winter I did not see how we were going to live. My husband and I had no warm clothing or underwear or socks or gloves. We sat down one morning to a breakfast of nothing but potatoes. All around us run hundreds of head of cattle that we could steal and have plenty. Many times at the corrals men have said to me: "Don't you want your brand on this one?" I have always said no but I am not certain if I can again.

PEARL DANNIEL.

Babies, Just Babies

I JUDGE from what I read in the newspapers that officialdom is very much pleased with the high birth rate among our millions of embattled but unbowed citizens on the relief rolls. It isn't quite clear to me why anyone should be delighted, but I judge they are because they keep on announcing the score from month to month. It gets to be a somewhat battered statistic as it bangs around over the country, varying with each locality, but in general it seems that the birth rate among those on the relief rolls is 35 percent higher than it is for the rest of us. I gather that in some places where about one-third of the populace is on relief, these persons contribute more than one-half of the births; thus putting to shame the more fortunate two-thirds. I don't know whether any of these statistics are reliable, but they show a certain consistency that argues in favor of their acceptance. There doesn't seem to be any central agency looking after the subject; sometimes a statistic comes popping out of entirely unofficial quarters. The fecundity score of the relief rolls seems to be a matter of considerable public interest and discussion.

When I say that officialdom seems to be pleased with the record, I admit that I don't know just who officialdom is. They don't step forth and identify themselves and throw their hats in the air or cheer. They just keep on announcing the score. That they are pleased with it is merely my own conclusion, based, in part, on the fact that Congress was importuned to pass a law permitting the spread of information about birth control through the United States mails, and declined. In fact Congress declined so positively that the bill died in committee. That was only a few weeks ago, and the argument was offered that the people on relief ought not to have so many babies. Congress evidently disagreed with this view. Nevertheless, some of my friends in Washington (I am writing this in Washington) say that it is not true that there is loud cheering about the relief-roll birth rate. They say it is deplored. But they simply must be mistaken. I call their attention to the following news item on page four of the Newark, New Jersey, Star-Eagle of February 16, 1935:

> Public Safety Director James J. McMahon today promised to have ousted from their position every E.R.A. case worker in Montclair who "goes about spreading birth-control propaganda."
>
> McMahon, after a conference with Mrs. Elizabeth McElroy, Montclair E.R.A. director, said clergymen in Montclair had complained to him their parishioners were being coerced into practising birth control by E.R.A. case workers.
>
> According to stories received by McMahon, the several E.R.A. case workers, whose names were not revealed, have threatened to cut off from relief rolls those couples who refused to practise birth control.
>
> McMahon said Mrs. Elizabeth McElroy, the local supervisor, denied this was being done by her aides.
>
> "Should any E.R.A. case worker," McMahon commented, "continue to spread propaganda about birth control I shall see that he is dismissed immediately."

There have been similar news items in other newspapers, and I judge that they mean that E.R.A. case workers must not endeavor to spread birth control among the people on the relief rolls. If they don't mean that I have, of course, made a serious error, but not an inexcusable one, I hope.

After all, it is generally agreed that lack of confidence in the future is one of the most serious obstacles to recovery. Mr. Hoover and Mr. Roosevelt agreed on that point. No doubt they are both cheered by the example of these suffering but brave people at the bottom of the heap, these people who probably had least to do with the collapse of our economic machine—many of whom, in fact, have seen no part of it but the bottom—and still have faith in our tomorrow; a faith that is in striking contrast with the flabby uncertainty of those who have held the throttle of our economic machine and apparently view tomorrow with horror and alarm. I should like to continue with this beautiful thought and would, except for the troublesome fact that I must imply that those who have seen only the bottom of the system know more about it than those who have had passage on A-deck.

Nevertheless I think I have proved that there is important evidence to support my assertion that the birth rate among the people on relief is highly pleasing to officialdom. And I am sure that there is no evidence to prove that it is not pleasing. I challenge anyone to get a statement for publication from those in high official position complaining of this birthrate and saying it should be lowered.

The people on relief are still citizens, just like the rest of us. They have an inalienable right to children, if they so elect. But equally important is their right to determine what is a reasonable number and when they will have them. These people are temporarily, and to their embarrassment, wards of the state. If it determines that they shall not be assisted in the preservation of this inalienable right, then they lose it at the very time when it is of most urgent importance to them. The state cannot play fast and loose with inalienable rights of any nature without paying a penalty.

CHESTER T. CROWELL.

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Washington Notes

Head Man Hopkins—Eagle's End—The Wagner Bill and Mr. Roosevelt—General Jim Looks White, Anyway

CLOUDS of uncertainty continue to hang over the work-relief organization, the delay in the setting up of which has seemed hard to explain on any ground consistent with good management. Here is an immense proposition upon which the major administration stress is to be laid this year. It was conceived nearly five months ago and has been a law for nearly six weeks. Yet, the machinery to put the plan into execution is still far from complete and it will be weeks more before it really begins to function. The chief reason for complaint appears to be that Mr. Roosevelt has not yet made it clear in whose hands the real directing authority will be vested. The pretense that he himself will be the directing head is not to be taken seriously. The real power must be lodged with one of his subordinates.

For some time the idea prevailed that Mr. Frank Walker, reinstalled as chairman of the National Emergency Council, was the man really in command. Recently it has been apparent that Mr. Walker will function at the secretarial and coördinating end rather than in the executive field, and that, in the final analysis, Mr. Harry Hopkins will be in control. Perhaps he is about as good a selection as the President can make from the material at hand. Mr. Hopkins has more energy and enthusiasm than almost anyone now connected with the administration. He possesses what is known as a "dynamic personality" and he has a lot of good qualities along with a considerable number of defects. One of these is a disposition to imitate in language and manner the unlamented General Johnson. The imitation is not a success and Mr. Hopkins would be wise either to cease it altogether or find a sounder model than the late chief of the N.R.A.

Speaking of the N.R.A., what happened to it in the Senate seems to me fairly close to the death blow. The passage of the Clark resolution limiting its operations strictly to interstate business, forbidding price fixing and extending its life only ten months instead of two years, would seem to mark the finish. It was passed by the Senate in disregard of the combined White House-Richberg request. What was more significant, however, was the cognizance taken on the floor of the Senate of the published reports of the administration plan to have the House pass the Richberg two-year bill and then force that on the Senate through the Conference Committee. Notice was plainly served by Senators Harrison, Clark and Borah that any such effort would cause a revolt in the Senate that would mean no legislation at all before June 16, on which date, without legislation, the N.R.A. would automatically die.

In the face of this attitude, it seems reasonable to believe that the Clark resolution will stand. The administration will have to choose between a tremendously shriveled and restricted N.R.A. or none at all. In all likelihood it will choose the former. Of course, before it makes the choice, the Supreme Court decision in the pending case will have been rendered. That may obviate the necessity of choosing because, since the railroad-pension-law decision, the general belief is that the Court, by another five-to-four verdict, will decide along the lines of the Clark resolution. But whether the Court so decides or not, the Clark resolution looks like the only legislation on the subject that can be passed at this session, and it is of such a character as to put an end to the N.R.A. as we have heretofore known it.

For the first time in many weeks, progressives and labor leaders here in Washington have something to be cheerful about. The action of the Senate in passing the Wagner labor-disputes bill was both unexpected, because of its promptness, and startling in the size of the favorable vote, 63 to 12. It is now taken for granted that it will pass the House, perhaps before this issue of The New Republic reaches its readers. It is also taken for granted that the President will sign it—indeed, if there had been any real doubt on that point, it would never have gone through.

The fact that it got past the Senate barricades has left some of Mr. Roosevelt's advisers looking more than a little foolish. The Wagner bill was the most unpopular measure on the administration program, except the holding-company bill. Pressure from business men upon the President to drop these two pieces of legislation, and to curtail the rest of his program, has been tremendous. The President will now be even less inclined to listen to such advice than he was before.

In taking this attitude, he is undoubtedly wise. I know he has been thoroughly sold on the soundness of the idea of getting everything he wants at this session, both in the way of reforms and of appropriations. So far as the latter is concerned, he will not have to ask for any more money next year. As to reform, the feeling among his closest advisers has been and still is that if the social-security program is not put through at this session, while he still has the whip hand over Congress, it may not go through at all. Sessions of Congress immediately preceding a national election are notoriously barren of results. The President knows this and wants it that way; he does not want to have to ask anything from Congress next year.

There is not much doubt that if he is sufficiently determined he can get all he wants before the adjournment. All he has to do is to insist upon Congress's staying here until his program is cleaned up. It might be pleasanter for him to get Congress out of Washington and off his hands before July. Perhaps he may have to defer some of his summer traveling plans. But they, after all, are of minor importance, and the big thing from his standpoint is to get all the administration bills he really needs through now, so that none of them can become issues in the campaign.

As for the campaign, there is still no indication of when Mr. Farley is going to retire from the Cabinet. His continuance in the Postmaster Generalship under the circumstances grows more offensive all the time. In the face of the announcement of his retirement, this indefinite holding to his Cabinet post while devoting practically all his time to running the Democratic National Committee does seem inexcusable. Perhaps now that Senator Huey Long's

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charges have been thrown out the Senate window by a unanimous party vote, Mr. Farley may consider himself no longer under fire and quit. The senatorial whitewash was an excellent job so far as it went, but it is entirely accurate to say that a good many Democratic Senators who voted to vindicate Mr. Farley regard his availability as campaign manager for Mr. Roosevelt in 1936 as much diminished.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

The Holding Companies Hold Out for 1942—Sleight-of-Hand on the Bonus—Major Angas Booms the American Boom

THE STRATEGY of all the groups representing big business in Washington when they cannot defeat any regulatory or punitive proposal outright is to have the subject matter referred to a commission or to postpone action until after 1940. The theory, of course, is obvious. It is always easier to deal with a commission than with a whole Congress. Furthermore, referring the matter to a commission actually postpones action for the time being. It is better still to defer definitive action until after 1940. After 1940, the dreamers believe, the great storm will have blown over, the crusading spirit will have evaporated, prosperity will have returned or the present regime will have been completely discredited and by the providence of God in some mysterious way the Grand Old Party will have returned to power. Then the representatives of big business can proceed leisurely to do nothing or undo anything that may have been done.

This is the plan adopted to defeat the holding-company bill now pending in Congress. And apparently the sponsors of the bill have obligingly conceded this important point. They have put off the date for dissolution of such holding companies as may be found guilty until 1942.

This holding-company bill has in it one thing worth having—that is the power to investigate the structure of the utility holding companies. It has one illusory hope, that holding companies can be regulated. There has been a great pother about the "sentence of death" on all utility holding companies by 1940. Of course there is no sentence of death in that bill. Holding companies will be called on to simplify their capital structure and those adjudged by the commission to be essential to geographic or economical integration of operating companies may be permitted to continue under government regulation.

What will the commission determine is essential? That will depend on the kind of men named to the commission. In any case we may be assured that many holding-company concerns will be preserved. And we may be equally assured that no government will ever be able to regulate them. If the bill is passed, therefore, we will get the benefit of a study. That is all to the good. But anyone who supposes we will get anything else is, in my judgment, very much mistaken.

The United States continues to pay interest charges on railroads. The Missouri-Kansas-Texas road has not paid a dividend since 1931. It admits it will have a net income deficit of $2,300,000 for this year. It not only cannot pay dividends, it can't pay interest on its bonds. And now the Interstate Commerce Commission has authorized a loan of $2,300,000 to the road by the R.F.C. to meet its interest payments. Why? How much longer is the R.F.C. going to use government funds to save railroads that ought to be reorganized? The I.C.C. says reorganization of this road is not necessary at this time. Commissioner Charles D. Mahaffie dissents from this. The whole policy of saving these roads from the inevitable ought to be ended by the government. Nothing is holding up railroad rehabilitation more than this. The Democrats denounced the Hoover administration for this in 1932. Now they are continuing it on an even greater scale.

Unless I miss my guess, our Democratic friends in Washington are cooking up a nice little plan on the bonus. It is a typical New Deal plan and is designed to please everybody. The veterans will get their bonus and the sound citizens of the nation will be "saved" from inflation. Just how this will come about no one can say now. But apparently the end will be to defeat the Patman bill by a veto, which will momentarily anger the veterans, then to rush matters for the passage of something like the Vinson bill, under which the bonus will be paid out of a bond issue. Thus they will get their money, and the President will be able to boast that he saved the nation from greenbacks, and he will smile and the nation will smile and the whole subject will be kept out of the 1936 campaign.

Or suppose that before this appears in print the bonus veto is actually overriden. Then, like a good politician, project yourself forward into next October—1936 with its election. What will the veterans say then? Will they be troubled by the veto? Not at all. They will say it was the Democrats who gave them the bonus. And what will the Sound Thinkers say? They will say that you will have to give Franklin D. Roosevelt credit for vetoing it and trying to stop it.

The President is against it. The Vice President is for it. But on almost every question in the New Deal there is a water-bucket on each shoulder. A Stock Exchange bill is passed to please the lefts, but it is fitted with a set of removable teeth to please the rights. A holding-company bill is proffered to please the lefts, but to please the rights, nothing important can be done under it until the administration is safely out of power. Truly the marching song of the administration is "Right, Left; Right, Left."

Which brings us to Major Angas, who is in again. He is the "economist" who predicted a year ago that the great American boom would begin shortly. He now predicts that it has already begun. This is a new technique in prophecy—first to issue the forecast and then to claim it is fulfilled no matter what happens. Mr. Hoover may follow the pattern and deny that there was a collapse and claim that poverty has ended and that there are two chickens in every pot and two cars in every garage. I read of Major Angas' claim of victory on one page of the newspaper and a few pages further back I noticed that the business index has been dropping steadily for three months and that relief payments by the government are higher this year than they were when the Major's prophecy was first loosed upon the happy earth.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

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Twelve Ways to Dodge the Income Tax

THE DOCUMENT reproduced on this page and the next is one of the curiosities of recent American history. As will be seen, it is a letter from David H. Blair, Commissioner of Internal Revenue, to the Secretary of the Treasury who, during Mr. Blair's incumbency, was Andrew W. Mellon. Mr. Blair states that "pursuant to your request" he is telling his aged superior, one of the two or three wealthest men in America, of various way by which an individual may legally avoid the income tax. Mr. Blair lists for Mr. Mellon's inspection twelve ways, which may be summarized as follows:

1. Permit profits to accumuate without disturbing them.
2. Make fictitious loans from corporations to individuals.
3. Make fictitious gifts to members of one's family.
4. Set up dummy corporations in foreign countries.
5. Sell securities or other property that has depreciated in value, in order to establish a loss.
6. Sell property on the instalment plan, with a first payment of less than one-fourth the total value.
7. Set up a fictitious family partnership.
8. Deed over to members of your family property that has appreciated in value.
9. Set up a trust for the benefit of minor children.
10. Create a personal corporation.
11. Set up a dummy trust to liquidate the assets of a corporation.
12. Purchase tax-exempt securities.

This remarkable document was made public a short time ago during the hearings in Pittsburgh on the Mellon tax suit that is still in progress. The government is suing Mr. Mellon for more than $3,000,000 in back taxes, as was described recently in The New Republic by Marquis W. Childs ("Mr. Mellon in Court," in our issue of May 15). On the witness stand, Mr. Mellon denied all knowledge of the Blair memorandum. He first tried to suggest that it might have been prepared for some other Secretary of the Treasury, but withdrew the suggestion when he saw that it was signed by Mr. Blair. He insisted, however, that he had no recollection of having asked for such a memorandum, and had not acted upon its advice.

Nevertheless, he admitted that he has used at least five of the methods described to reduce his own income taxes. He has sold securities to offset capital gains. He has made gifts to members of his family (about half his fortune of $200,000,000 is now in the hands of his children). He has formed corporations. He has sold property on the instalment plan. He has accepted loans from corporations in which he was a stockholder. Mr. Mellon's contention

Tax. Question

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON 1923

OFFICE OF
COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL REVENUE

ADDRESS REPLY TO
COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL REVENUE
AND REFER TO

The Secretary of the Treasury; and copy in file

Pursuant to your request for a memorandum setting forth some of the various ways by which an individual may legally avoid tax I am pleased to submit the following, which has been prepared by a member of the Income Tax Unit of this Bureau:

A means by which individuals may avoid tax is to permit the earnings of a corporation to accumulate by not making a distribution of its earned surplus to its stockholders. Section 220 of the 1921 Law provides that any corporation formed or availed of for the purpose of preventing the imposition of surtaxes upon its stockholders through the medium of permitting its gains and profits to accumulate instead of being distributed there shall be levied a tax equal to 25% of the amount thereof which shall be in addition to the tax imposed by Section 230; but the fact that the gains or profits are in any case permitted to accumulate shall not be construed as evidence to avoid the tax unless the Commissioner certifies that such accumulation is unreasonable for the purpose of the business. This Section has been found very difficult to administer.

In a case where the stock of a corporation is closely held it is possible for individuals to make loans from corporations and to give non-interest bearing notes payable on demand to the corporation for such loans, thus escaping the surtaxes which would be applicable to an individual who had received a distribution in the nature of dividends.

A means which is very frequently resorted to by an individual is for him to make a division of his property in the nature of gifts to members of his family, the income from said property would fall in the lower surtax brackets, thus reducing the tax.

By forming a foreign corporation to handle operations in foreign countries and retaining the funds in a foreign country would prevent the United States Government from taxing any profits on sales made to the foreign corporation on goods shipped out of this country.

An individual may reduce his taxes by selling securities or other property which he would not ordinarily dispose of which have depreciated in value, thus taking his loss to apply against other income taxable in a particular year.

It is possible to avoid tax by the sale of property on an installment plan, receiving in exchange an amount in cash less than one-fourth

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is that he did these things without reference to the Blair memorandum and without any intention to defraud the government. He has never accepted the view of those numerous critics who have held that it was a monstrous absurdity for a man worth several hundred million dollars to become Secretary of the Treasury.

It was revealed at the trial that the man who for some years has aided Mr. Mellon in handling his financial affairs so as to reduce his tax liability was taken by him from the government service, where he had previously been engaged in just the opposite sort of work. Mr. Mellon asked Commissioner Blair to send him over a bright young man to help prepare his income tax. Donald D. Shepard was sent over for this purpose—and that was the last the government service ever saw of him. He is still working for Mr. Mellon.

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the value of the property and notes for the remainder, payable over a period of years.

Another means very frequently resorted to is for an individual to form a partnership consisting of members of his immediate family. The income from the partnership being taxable to the individual members of the partnership whether distributed or not. The effect of such arrangement would keep the income from falling in the high surtax rates.

It is possible for an individual to avoid tax by deeding property which has appreciated in value to his wife or other members of his immediate family. The profit on the sale would be the same as it would have been in the hands of the donor or the last preceding owner by whom it was not acquired by gift but the effect would be that a wealthy man with a large income would be able to avoid the high surtax rates on such a sale and the profit would be taxed to the recipient of the gift at a lower surtax rate.

By the creation of a trust in favor of minor children by their parents, who are trustees, it is possible to distribute income from securities and other income producing property and reduce the total tax. It could be said that the trust was primarily created for the purpose of keeping intact the amount received by a parent under a will who desired to pass the entire amount to his children at his death or that the trust was created for the purpose of protecting his family while engaged in a hazardous business. The effect, however, in either case would result in a saving in taxes.

By the forming of a corporation to take over the operations of an individual, the stock in which is either held by the individual who paid for the property or is distributed among those who would be the beneficiaries in the case of his death had the property been held in the name of the individual; the maximum tax paid by the corporation under the 1921 Act would not exceed 12½% and the surtaxes to the stockholders would not apply to any portion of the undistributed income.

It is possible where stock of a corporation is closely held and the corporation may own assets which have appreciated in value and which the individual stockholders desire to sell for the purpose of realizing a profit to form a trust taking over the assets of the corporation. The trust then disposing of the assets at a profit which profit would be distributed among the members of the trust who were also former members of the liquidated corporation. The effect in reducing the taxes would be the amount of tax the corporation would have to pay in case the assets had been sold by said corporation.

To make investments in tax exempt securities is a means of large savings in taxes to taxpayers of considerable wealth.

Commissioner.

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Two Films

OUT OF the several pictures with great possibilities that have come along in a month, it is oddly enough "The Bride of Frankenstein" that puts up the best show. Advertised as a chiller, this film turns out to be something else, having a lot of jollification, nice fancy, elegant mounting—there is, in short, beauty as well as the beast.

James Whale's whole method of production has been one of going as easily as possible on the supernatural. The everyday note is stressed continually—as in the petty bombast of the chief burgher after the monster's capture, as in the pathetic business of having the Thing burn his hand and, with every man's horror turned against him, find a friend in the blind hermit. And for macabre good humor, there is the role of the scientist who uses his power over the monster to get Frankenstein's collaboration on a mate for the poor brute. With the good assistance of Boris Karloff, the producers have made their wild story rather human, and the audience gets it.

In background, atmosphere, dramatic invention, "The Bride of Frankenstein" will stand up as one of the best of the year. The episode of the electric storm is an astonishing bit of well sustained imaginative play. There are traces of "Caligari," particularly in the stylized woods and crag of the first chase sequence (a quite breathless and eerie sort of affair), but the point is that in such matters "Caligari" is gone one better, cardboard backdrops not being here quite so much as end in themselves. In short, a great deal of art has gone into the planning and taking of whole portions of this film, but it is the kind of art that gives the healthy feeling of men with their sleeves rolled up and working, worrying only about how to put the thing over in the best manner of the medium—no time for nonsense and attitudes and long hair.

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The picture that John Ford has made out of Liam O'Flaherty's "Informer" opens a lot of new possibilities for Hollywood, tackles something that is really fine, and manages several memorable scenes. But because it deals with the sort of thing that must be handled adequately if it is to go over, its persistent inadequacies make it more disappointing than many pictures with less to recommend them.

The story gets off to a beautiful start, riding along on the unfamiliar color and excitement of the period when the Terror was in Ireland, tightening on the country and walking through its streets in armed squads. And it carries well through the early part of that evening when Frankie McPhillip (Wallace Ford is excellent in this part) came in from the hills, to slip home in the fog and be sold to his death, with the Tans piling out of their lorries to surround the house, and Gypo Nolan, the betrayer, watching the clock at headquarters in a cold sweat. For dramatic vigor and beauty of composition there have been few sequences to compare with the one that ends with the camera looking from behind Frankie down into the court where the Tans look up with their machine gun.

So far, the atmosphere and the sense of a tragic character have been well built. But shortly after Gypo has stumbled out with his blood money, there begins a train of happenings many of which hang fire altogether—the result partly of faulty casting, partly of bad plot treatment. Margot Grahame has a weak part as Gypo's girl, and fits it; Heather Angel is a personal nonentity; the rebel leader (Preston Foster) is hollow and his chief aide spoils a fine likely face by pantomiming with it, while Una O'Connor as the mother is a constant irritation. These people all play inevitably into the story, and are abetted by the director, who must needs drive every nail down three inches below the surface: hence whole organic stretches are made flabby or (as is the case with the last episode in church, the intercession of Katy) actually distressing. What is more, there is constant reliance on symbolic fade-ins and ghostly voices, on an elaborately cued and infirm musical score, and on the device of squeezing the last drop of meaning or sentiment out of a ten-minute sequence by hanging onto it for a quarter of an hour. It hardly seems that the man responsible for these cheap shifts could be the one who schemed the earlier episodes, the extended revelry of the middle parts and the final trial scene.

But any one of the ham touches would be negligible—all of them taken together might even be discounted—if the central part had been sure of conception and if McLaglen had been all the way up to it. I kept feeling that he lacked the final subtlety requisite to making the crude lines of this character wholly true. In attitudes he is at times superb, but he simply does not carry the thing along. Partly because of this, partly because of the direction, the doom Gypo Nolan is preparing for himself does not seem inevitable, and one gets the feeling of impatience that always comes when what should be a natural downfall seems to be turning into a dramatic pushover.

Hollywood deserves a lot of credit for tackling such a job, and thereby opening a new field for pictures; but I do not feel that the film itself does right by a story so powerful and moving as that of a man who was driven by hunger and suspicion into the tragic foolishness of turning informer in the Irish Terror.

OTIS FERGUSON.

Grant Wood

IT IS difficult to take the painting of Grant Wood seriously from the point of view of plastic quality. It offers so little for such a consideration. Yet it is probably just this that makes for what success it enjoys. The public does not want to look at pictures as plastic organizations; what it wants is a sort of visual pasture-ground for associations and reminiscences. The commonest approach to painting is through its extra-plastic elements, and the commonest mode of discussing painting is on similar grounds. For the painter, consequently, the most direct road to popular acceptance is through emphasis on mood and anecdote. But to emphasize thse features efficiently, plastic interests must be held consistently subordinate. A plastic organization that is not hackneyed presents a barrier to the ready assimilation of its representational content. A personalized plastic expression takes the character of an unfamiliar idiom and provokes an intuitive resentment in the observer: we like to be able to read ourselves into the expressions of others and resent anything alien.

But it is doubtful if Wood sacrificed any important gift for plastic expression in the process of his evolution. From his earlier efforts, hung in the recent retrospective exhibition at the Ferargil Galleries in New York, it was evident that he was quick to realize the difficulty of achieving a personal idiom that might afford any serious contribution to the plastic expression of his time. These early pieces were typical student pictures, except for being loosely impressionistic and possibly somewhat Brangwynesque in palette. They showed little sensibility to color and no attempt at a tight, disciplinarian modeling of forms.

The consequence of such an apprenticeship was clearly evident in his later work. There again, no sensibility to color was revealed, with particularly crying examples of its lack in "Death on Ridge Road" and the large female portrait hung opposite. In the loose ends of "Dinner for Threshers," as in "Death on Ridge Road," the artist showed his slack compositional sense; and in the flabby, characterless figures of the former picture, his feeble sense of modeling. The insensitively stylized forms in "Arbor Day" and "Paul Revere's Ride," with their gift-shop atmosphere, were in all probability suggested by chinaware patterns, as Wood is said to have explained. But they scarcely merit consideration on plastic grounds in any case, since whatever they contain of plastic expression has been frankly and completely subordinated to the sentimental. It might be said of his entire work, in fact, that this predominance of sentimental symbolism is the only consistently assertive characteristic.

To approach Wood's work from this angle is practically to abandon the field of plastic for that of popular psychology. Possibly his success in this latter realm is due to a completely unconscious tactical handling of the situation. About the year 1929, in any case, we see Wood's painting turn from foreign shores homeward. And it would seem that from the date at which the public mouth began to turn down at the corners, optimism in Wood's paintings began to rise. It is an optimism compounded of many moods and messages. National birth and rebirth: see "Arbor Day," "Birthplace of President Hoover," "Paul Revere's Ride."

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Well-being: see the "Dinner for Threshers." Survival: see his representation of antiques and his pastiches of primitive and colonial work. The suggestion of protected childhood: see the toy or knick-knack character of his landscapes. All this "psychological" content at first glance seems quite removed from the plastic handling. Yet, considered more closely, the two are intimately related—indeed, practically fused; there is nothing to fear from an unfamiliar idiom in the painting, and hence nothing to fear from the unfamiliar conditions of the times.

That Grant Wood should be accepted and celebrated as a representative American painter is of more interest as an economic symptom than as an art event.

JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY.

CORRESPONDENCE

The "Y" in Huey

SIR: When Senator Long, as Mr. Robert Morss Lovett reports (The New Republic, May 15) signed his name Hue P. Long on a Des Moines hotel register, he must have done so in a moment of haste or absent-mindedness. He was christened Huey, Huey is the name he has campaigned under and attached to all his papers of state, and Huey he should remain. It is not often in history that a man is endowed with a name so eloquently descriptive and nothing should be done to injure it. That "y" belongs where it stands—as essential a part of the name, and the man, as the tail of a braying cornfield mule.

New York City. HAMILTON BASSO.

Senator Cutting's Last Fight

SIR: The brief career of Senator Bronson Cutting was marked by a rare combination of culture and courage. To the qualities of a public-spirited intellectual liberal were added the ability of an incisive debater, a reserve that denoted depth of feeling and the power that springs from personal sincerity and social vision.

In his first Senate fight he used these qualities to create a major national issue of a tradition-bound custom, the censorship of imported literature. In his last fight he used them to humanize and vitalize statistics relating to a neglected cause. In all the welter of new deal issues no legislative action had been taken to meet the depression's effects on public-school education. These had been left to attention-on-the-side by small relief checks limited to teachers in towns of 5,000 inhabitants or less.

Senator Cutting visualized the 800,000 teachers and 27,000,000 pupils of the public schools, their rights, their needs and their importance to the nation's future. He saw the injustice and danger inherent in the facts laid before him. Unpaid and underpaid teachers, weakened morale, lowered standards, curtailed school terms and closing schools, with denial of promotion and enforced idleness, exhaustion of taxable resources—these supplied the issue on which he launched his fight, on the Senate floor, on March 20.

It was a fight to place Congress on record in specific terms, backed by a definite provision in the work-relief bill. The odds were against him. . . . Public-school teachers were a politically inarticulate and ineffective group. Letting the facts speak for themselves, Senator Cutting stated the case with sincerity, candor and clarity. "It seems to me much fairer," he said, "to lay down the policy as coming from Congress rather than to leave a matter of this degree of importance to the decision of any administrative official. . . . This amendment at least makes clear the intention of Congress. I do not believe any Senator would desire to have the public schools of the nation close. I do not see why we should not say so." Despite impassioned opposition, his amendment carried by a vote of 55 to 25. It led the conferees, and finally both Houses, to adopt an even more far-reaching provision, if fairly interpreted and applied by the administration.

Senator Cutting had definitely planned to continue the battle for public education along broader and more permanent lines. To that end the Public Education League had been launched by two of his friends. Its chief hope lay in the assurance of his support. Deprived of that, it will seek to maintain its existence as a fitting memorial to him and an agency for carrying on the cause whose opening legislative battle he led and won. Those who wish to coöperate may communicate with the writer at 125 Third Street, N. E., Washington, D. C.

Washington, D. C. RICHARD W. HOGUE.

A Request for Holmesiana

SIR: The late Mr. Justice Holmes has entrusted to Professor Felix Frankfurter, of the Harvard Law School, and to me the task of arranging for authoritative publications concerning his life and work, and by his will he appointed me Executor and left to me the use and disposal of his letters, papers and memoranda, including his rights in letters written by him. Professor Frankfurter and I shall be grateful if any who possess letters of his which may be fitly made available for publication would communicate with me or send to me such letters as they are willing to allow us to examine. All such material will be copied and the originals returned to those who are kind enough to entrust them to me My address is 84 State Street, Boston.

Boston, Mass. JOHN G. PALFREY.

Extracts from Letters

A ONE-DAY general strike in protest against the naval maneuvers in the Pacific is suggested by no less a person than Major-General Smedley D. Butler, retired commander of the United States Marines, according to a report sent in by Ernest Erber, leader of the Chicago Young People's Socialist League. The General is quoted as saying, "I would like to see a general strike of the workers against war. In fact, I wish the American Federation of Labor would right now call a one-day protest strike against the naval maneuvers in the Pacific and against the criminal efforts of Hearst, big business men and jingoes to involve us in a war with Japan. I spent thirty-five years with the biggest bill-collecting agency in the world, the U. S. Marines, before I began to wake up. I served in every rank, from private to general, and half that time was spent in fighting on foreign soil for the benefit of American bankers. But now I have sworn that I'll never fight again in a war outside our borders, nor let my three sons fight, even if I have to shoot the conscription officer that comes to take us. I don't mind saying I am frankly and wholly on the side of labor. A lot of public officials have the idea that in a strike a pane of glass is worth more than a worker's life. I have believed that capitalism could be controlled to give the workers a fair break. But I confess my faith in capitalism is steadily growing weaker."

Protests against the announced intention of Oswald W. Knauth, new director of the Emergency Relief Bureau of New York City, to institute strict enforcement of the destitution requirements for persons on the relief rolls have been received from representatives of professional, cultural and white-collar workers. It is estimated that 11,000 white-collar workers now on relief projects are unable to meet the letter of these requirements and are in danger of being ousted. It is pointed out that under the home-relief requirements not only must the individual himself be a complete pauper (without a single dollar in the bank and without an insurance policy, however small) but his relatives must also be paupers. If any member of a man's family is earning $10 or $15 a week he is not eligible for relief. Many men, trained to do socially necessary work, are forced to live on the savings of aged parents or on the meager income of a son or daughter. Moreover, all single men and childless couples are automatically dismissed from the projects, and instructed, if destitute, to apply for home relief. Organizations urging modification of these requirements include the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians; the Associated Office and Professional Emergency Employees; the Artists' Union; the Writers' Union; the Unemployed Teachers' Association; and the Association of Adult Educational Workers.

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New Talent

Three plays, Awake and Sing!, Till the Day I Die, Waiting for Lefty, by Clifford Odets. New York: Covici, Friede. 242 pages. $2.50.

THE JACKET of these three plays by Mr. Clifford Odets will supply ample enough hints of his dynamic effect on his critics. He "seems to have employed a machine gun rather than a pen," Mr. John Mason Brown says, in The New York Post . . . "unless all signs fail in fair weather, Clifford Odets has the stuff." Mr. John Anderson says in The New York Evening Journal, "His play has honesty and sharp observation, clear and flexible dialogue and undeniable power." "Until Clifford Odets' 'Awake and Sing!' opened a fortnight ago I had not realized that we have been blundering along for some time without acquiring any new dramatists," Mr. Brooks Atkinson writes, and adds that here is a new dramatist of exciting potentialities—the only one the present season has disclosed.

It is worth while quoting these sayings because critics, like doctors, have to bear some sort of underground resentment. They are specialists in the midst of normal, know-it-all life, and somebody always has to pay the price of any supposed difference in slant. When they are caught wrong—whoever the judge of that degree may be—there are many persons who are sure to delight in the fact. Nothing is more delicious to the general mind than the thought that an author is not appreciated until long after he is dead, one of the silliest of popular heresies. And what fun it would be if Mr. Anderson, Mr. Atkinson, Mr. Brown and others had thought Mr. Odets' plays not worth a rap!

As to Mr. Atkinson's remark about the only new dramatist that has been disclosed by the present season, all there is to say is that Mr. Odets is the only new one disclosed in a good many seasons. In fact it might have been a good idea to say that Mr. Odets is one of the few American playwrights who is worth thinking about at all.

Mr. Richard Watts, Jr., in The New York Herald Tribune says of "Waiting for Lefty" that this "short, dynamic drama . . . has all the qualities of a dramatic machine gun. . . . It veritably bombards you with emotional arguments, grim humor and sheer theatrical forcefulness."

I know too little about machine guns to do much with such comparisons, but I can speak modestly of my observations as to the projective powers of Mr. Odets' dramatic writing. The themes and the lines come over the footlights directly and without inner dangers of falsification. The end of "Awake and Sing!" does not move off into any full profundity, but it is effective enough theatre. The motivations throughout the plays and the list of characters are theatre through and through. It is possible that a few long speeches would have helped. When your dramatic instinct is as good as Mr. Odets', you need not fear taking time to clinch points or to let the characters wander for a moment farther into themselves. From the wholesome fear of such tediums, perhaps, comes the main shortcoming of this play: a certain vivacity at times, a sort of Broadway liveliness, when the dramatic mood lies lower. Such a mood has no will to register inch by inch, but rather to create and enforce by some deep and slow impact. The fear of being dull is by no means always wisdom, even in so pressing and immediate an art as that of the theatre. The beginning of wisdom in drama is the fear of losing attention, but the end of wisdom is to achieve for each moment the right tone. Curiously enough, I should advise Mr. Odets, with all that talent of his, that life and fullness of varied theatre feeling, to study not the fire-eaters among playwrights—whom he can already surpass—but Molière. Shakespeare, in such plays as "Othello," is a master of high tone, just as Maeterlinck, in "Pelléas and Melisande," maintains a certain starlit emasculation that threatens constantly to be remarkable theatre art. But Molière above them all maintains the steady drawing of what might be taken as mediocre substance or the life of the commonplace. Modulation and civilization, plus Mr. Odets' rhythms of emotion and pressure, would give us something indeed.

Mr. Clurman in his excellent introduction to the volume remarks that "the name of Chekhov has been brought up in connection with 'Awake and Sing!' The reference is flattering, of course, but perhaps a little misleading. For, while the American playwright does not especially cultivate his plot line, any more than the Russian, the whole quality of the former is active, impulsive and rather lusty, as compared to the thoughtful, delicately tempered and objective art of the man who wrote 'The Cherry Orchard.'"

It would be better to put that differently. The parallel of any new dramatist with Chekhov does not turn on impulsiveness, lustihood, thoughtfulness or even objectivity. Mr. Odets' likeness to Chekhov lies, first, in his use of the method of the seemingly irrelevant. Speech and emotion follow one on another without any surface connection. The scene is made up of dialogue that now answers itself from person to person, now arises, speech by speech, as if from hidden depths, more really relevant because more individual and more penetrating. Even in a democracy, where the discovery of a pink-toothbrush remedy must display an originality that any work of art is required to equal, it can do Mr. Odets no harm to say that his plays could never in the form they are now have existed without Chekhov.

"If comparisons are at all helpful," Mr. Clurman goes on to say, "in defining the nature of a playwright's talent, perhaps the name of Sean O'Casey may fit better in this connection. Not only do we find in 'Awake and Sing;' some of the special tenement tenderness that lends warmth to all the cold facts of O'Casey's Dublin dramas, but there is also a certain quality of improvisatory spontaneousness, a tendency to give to all the occurrences that are part of the characters' lives the same importance and sympathy, whether they be intense suffering or workaday routine."

As to that and the rest of Mr. Clurman's discussion of the two playwrights, I should say that Mr. O'Casey has powers of poetry and Irish glamor that Mr. Odets could scarcely hope to manifest; but that for my own taste I prefer "Waiting for Lefty" to most of the O'Casey plays that I have seen or read. The stage placement, the acting and the general design that the Group Theatre gave to this play were fresh and admirable. But the play itself, especially among labor plays, seems to me one of the freshest and most telling things we have ever had.

STARK YOUNG.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Conscience Fund

IN BEHALF of a dozen good or bad and in either case unusual books that I took home without reviewing, I am offering this page of contributions to a critics' bad-conscience fund.

For example, I should have written about "Lean Men" (Macmillan, $2.50) when it was published early this spring. It received only fair notices, and I understand that not many copies have been sold, but there has been an underground discussion of it, with violent differences of opinion. Some people believe that it is among the best of revolutionary novels; I don't agree with them. It is an extraordinarily vivid picture of Barcelona in 1931—the docks, the crimping houses, the churches and cabarets; the secret agitation among the workers; the gunmen in the pay of Anarchist or Catholic unions (or of the police, more commonly); the founding of literary clubs that came out into the open as revolutionary centers after Alfonso was overthrown, in April; then the slow planning for an armed insurrection that was called too soon, that wavered and broke before the guns of the police. Ralph Bates, the author, knows all this at first hand. He worked on the Barcelona docks, he had comrades shot down beside him, he helped to smuggle arms over the Pyrenees. He must have put something of himself into his hero; and yet it is the hero who falsifies an otherwise convincing novel.

For the hero is not only Ralph Bates; he is also presented as an agent of the Communist International sent to advise and direct the workers' revolution in Catalonia. He doesn't fit the part. Instead of organizing the workers, he spends his time partly in romantic adventures and partly in mooning over two women he left in London. When he returns, should he go to bed with Lydia or with Elizabeth, or possibly with both of them? He delays for hundreds of pages in making his decision, while the reader follows his hesitations with profound uninterest. Again he wonders and wonders whether violence is justifiable, meanwhile staying away from important meetings. As a Bolshevik agitator, he is a cross between a bright pink esthete and an Eagle Scout.

"Restless Days," by Lilo Linke (Knopf, $3) is another book that I should have written about when it was first published. The trouble was that I didn't really enjoy it, even though I felt that I ought to be reading it with deep interest. It is the autobiography of a Prussian girl who was eight years old when the War began, who had schoolgirl crushes on aviators, who went to work in a bookstore during the inflation, who joined the youth movement, and who gradually became politicalized, until by 1932 she was a member of the Social Democratic Party trying vainly to save the Weimar Republic. Her story is full of candor, feeling, wholesomeness—and that is really the trouble. She is one of those people, good as bread, who are pleasant and reassuring to have as friends, but not exciting to read about.

"Things to Live For" (Macmillan, $2.50) is worth mentioning as the silliest existing book of memoirs by anyone not in his first or second childhood. The author, Francis Stuart, is a young Irish novelist. The things for which he has lived are apparently four in number: women, Ireland, horses and the Church. He fought in the Irish revolution and spent more than a year in prison. He fell in love, he owned racehorses, he went to a pilgrimage to Lourdes. But about none of these things, not even horses, does he write with any singleness of purpose. Always he seems to be looking over his shoulder and asking us to appreciate how Irish, irresponsible, passionate, hare-brained, life-drunken and intolerably charming is Francis Stuart.

Then there is "Hacienda" (Harrison of Paris, $3), a novelette printed on Arnold English unbleached pure-rag paper in an edition limited to 895 numbered copies. I wish that something by Katherine Anne Porter could be published without limitations and distributed to an undeluxified audience. Her stories, at their best, are both easy and intense, both gossip and poetry. "Hacienda" is rich in gossip, but it lacks the desperate emotion of a story like "Flowering Judas." A good deal of its interest lies in the fact that it deals with Eisenstein taking pictures on a pulque ranch, with Upton Sinclair's brother-in-law trying to boss the show, with the Mexican authorities interfering and censoring—in other words, with the causes of the quarrel that would soon be thundering over "Thunder Over Mexico." Miss Porter is the only writer who has dealt with the quarrel impartially; she treats all sides and parties with even-handed malice.

I wanted to write a long review of Aragon's new novel, "Les Cloches de Bâle" (Denoël and Steele, 18 francs), but I hear that it is being translated and will probably be published in this country next fall. The review can wait till then. For the present it is enough to say that "The Bells of Basel"—will that be the English title?—is more interesting than any other political novel written in France since the War. Like most political novels, it has one grave fault, namely, that its form is imposed from without instead of developing from the lives of the characters. But there is no space to go into that question here, or indeed to review any of the other books I hoped to mention, except in the form of brief affidavits.

Thus, I hereby declare and affirm:

That Max Eastman's last book, "Art and the Life of Action," is full of keenness, common sense and uncommon nonsense. Under the last heading belongs his notion that "A cup or beaker, if it is to be artistic, must not only satisfy our eye and hand and lip, but must stop us from drinking."

That the Nonesuch Press one-volume editions of the English classics (Random House, $3.50 each) are unusually pleasant and practical books to have in one's library. Two recent additions to the series are a Swift that includes the complete text of "Gulliver's Travels," with selections from the other writings, and a Synge that includes all he wrote.

That a book called "Azeff the Spy," written in German by a White Russian refugee, translated into wooden English and published last fall by Doubleday, Doran, is extraordinarily interesting to anyone who likes to study the relations between radicals and the secret police. There are dozens of little Azeffs plotting in our own country.

Finally, that in spite of Trotsky and William Henry Chamberlin and all the other historians who have dealt with the Russian revolution, the best book about it is still "Ten Days That Shook the World." John Reed, watching the revolution day by day, was able simultaneously to describe its surface appearance, its political undercurrents and the reflection of these in the words and deeds of ordinary Russians. His book is a miracle of reporting. And merely to mention that it has been reprinted in the Modern Library discharges a heavy debt to my conscience fund.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

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Three Soviet Travelers

A Vagabond in Sovietland, by Harry A. Franck. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 282 pages. $2.75.

Moscow Carrousel, by Eugene Lyons. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 357 pages. $3.50.

Soviet Journey, by Louis Fischer. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. 308 pages. $2.50.

IT IS difficult to review particular books on Soviet Russia without talking about books on Russia in general. For more and more it is apparent, especially in the lighter travel books, that something more than Russia is being written about, and something more than the author's personal attitude is being revealed. When Wilson said that Russia was the acid test, he was saying a great deal more than he probably realized.

Each of these three books tells of a Soviet journey: Fischer's from the point of view of a correspondent of twelve years' standing, Lyons' from that of a six-year resident, Franck's from the casual angle of a month-long tourist. But each has his eye, warily or hopefully, on the American reader who has no inkling of what is going on over there and, above all, little notion of what is going on over here or in the rest of the world. While none says it in so many words, you know the struggle each one had, as has every writer on the Soviet Union, to make up his mind whom he is writing for and what knowledge and education—in politics, sociology, economic reality—he may take for granted.

One might have thought the time past for a slight tourist tale such as "A Vagabond in Sovietland." Mr. Franck tells you about the crowded street cars, frontier formalities, rest days, the looks of Leningrad, of women, of G.P.U. men, meals, dress, haircuts, illegal money, guides, funerals, law courts, love and marriage, abortions—touching on all of them very lightly, with apologies if he finds them good and an obvious air of "It's all right you see, Mr. Hearst," when he finds them bad. He would like to be facetious but seems held back by an uncomfortable suspicion, pressed on him more and more the farther into the spirit of the place he penetrates, that while he thinks it a good joke, the Russians care tremendously about what they are doing. Mr. Franck doesn't go into the whys of the Soviet Union, because he expects his summer-passenger readers to be bored by such spectacled discussion; yet, since the why obtrudes everywhere, he gives it an occasional condescending or frowning pat. Perhaps that is the way to make the casual reader interested enough in Russia to go and see for himself. But one feels he might go and look and never see. Mr. Franck's book won't help him much; for it offers so little connection between cause and effect that the reader is likely to finish it in a state of confusion, with less actual knowledge than he had at the start.

Eugene Lyons' book belongs to a different category. While one feels that Mr. Franck doesn't know better, one feels that Lyons does, and that he willingly confuses his reader. His "Moscow Carrousel" deals in a tinselly and superficial way with things that even Mr. Franck is serious about. Mr. Lyons laughs with the best of them about dialectic materialism, pats the tourist and newly arrived engineer metaphorically but heartily on the back, winks slyly with the smoking-room-story gang, concedes a bit every now and again to the really impressed. But show that he understands, even secretly? Never. He tells about foreigners and homeless children, about parties and domestic life, about wages, incentives and propaganda. He gives many incidents that ought to be revealing—red-tape tangles, midnight imprisonments, party purges, "stolen" love affairs, jokes and inside tales. But when you are about to say, "Oh, then you *do* feel that two and two make four," he'll wink and, "Sh-h-h-h," he'll say, "there may be a G.P.U. man around the corner!" He tries to express the contradictions of this new world in terms of the old, and one might as well translate the language of a Ford mechanic into Sanskrit.

It is not easy to estimate by what alchemy the indubitable facts of Mr. Lyons' book become transformed into a picture that is too frequently not correct. Part of the fault is that though he gives many anecdotes, each certainly true enough, they are badly selected. There is, for example, a preponderance of emphasis on the troubles of the "former" people, foreigners, valuta girls, tourists, left-overs, heretics, those who for one reason or another are not Soviet people, and neither understand nor sympathize with their new regime. For every Lydia Petrovna who shouts, "To hell with your logic! Not one of you understands. Not one! You haven't been through it and you can't possibly understand. We can't fail and we won't fail," there are a dozen who look round furtively when they speak, huddle in bitter groups or go out and get shot for counter-revolutionary activity. The warm, human, intelligent, hard-working, tolerant party worker is a Russian type that few could fail to encounter. Mr. Lyons seems to have missed him.

He is really at his best when he describes specific individuals, and is not faced with the problem of what the reader will think of his politics. The chapter on Stalin shows that whatever he would have liked to make the Soviet leader, the subject was simple and human and frank enough to write his own chapter. The book is worth having for this Stalin interview and for its photographs. But to hope that it will help you get at the core of any Soviet thing, the simplest situation, is to be disappointed.

Louis Fischer demonstrates that if you understand Russia and give your descriptions of the country's workers and intellectuals, leaders and followers, politicians, statesmen, peasants and professionals in the light of your understanding, the account loses nothing of vividness and interest. With Fischer we also traverse the country and see Soviet men and women, boys and girls at work and at play, eating meals, laughing, loving and marrying, lying in the sun and discussing the fundamentals of their political philosophy or the difficulties, problems, hopes and ideals they keep so much to the fore in their daily lives, newspapers and meetings. Fischer does not wink or wisecrack about the rapid demise of the poor old classless society. He advances the usual American's objections and puzzlements to the men he interviews. And his Premier Mgaloblishvili of Georgia counters: "You must not measure a socialist economy with a capitalist yardstick."

This book takes up a number of points that give pause to some honest and sympathetic students of Soviet Russia, such as the growth of bureaucracy, the inequalities in wages, the still great lack of consumption goods, the creeping in of capitalist incentives, the seeming denial of some liberties not yet wholly denied in all capitalist countries, the emphasis on national cultures within each of the 180 nationalities, the pressure to accept one economic *Weltanschauung*. Fischer does not answer these himself but airs his fears before a number of representative Russians, allowing them to answer and the reader to judge, each for himself.

The most interesting and unfamiliar part of the book is the trip to Soviet Asia, with its fascinating interviews with little known personalities—"rugged individuals" such as the

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acting premier of Armenia, or the Armenian Catholicus, or Beriya, the Communist leader of the Caucasus, or Betal Kalmikov, Communist leader of Kabardinia-Balkaria. These men are live and powerful, workmanlike at their tasks and never forgetful of what they are after. They do much to dispel the impression that Soviet Russians, when they are not dead of starvation, are a soulless bitter mass of wretches muttering the words of Stalin's latest speech. Fischer has mastered well the technique of fusing the essential political and spiritual meaning of Soviet life with vivid, colorful and inclusive pictures. ELLA WINTER.

Western

Riding the Mustang Trail, by Forrester Blake. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 259 pages. $2.50.

THE Southwest—Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico—is buried in the blood of Forrester Blake. Speaking its language with all the Western gusto of tall tales told and the gash of sunlight on the plains and the hard tang of horseflesh sweating on the prairies, Blake is an honest and at times exciting chronicler of events that are, objectively, trivial.

His own history is a simple one: Young man. Born and lived most of his life in Oklahoma. Spent several years in Texas and New Mexico wrangling horses. Perversely enough, was schooled at the University of Michigan. "Riding the Mustang Trail" grows out of his experiences during the summer of 1932, when he and four companions drove a large herd of wild mustangs from the Mescalero Apache Reservation of New Mexico for 400 miles to Cimarron County in Oklahoma in order to sell them at a profit.

Taking this slight narrative for plot, Blake expands it by the age-old but telling devices of the born story-teller whose object is to delay rather than hasten: character delineation, human coincidence, local color and folksay. On a different level, too, his work is in the direct tradition of those early pioneer documents—such as Fray Benavides' "Memorial to the King of Spain"—in that he adheres to the vagaries of native life and soil with the accompanying recognition of their interrelations.

Some of his tall tales are unequaled in the folklore of the Southwest. For instance, the story about the duel between Natt and Squinter-Joe Bulger. Natt was the best pool-player in the Southwest. Squinter-Joe Bulger was the best pool-player in the Southwest. There couldn't be two. It had to be thrashed out. They picked the biggest pool table in the country—a thousand yards long. Squinter-Joe Bulger and Natt were going to shoot it out. Championship of the Republic. Natt would have lost except that, being a good pool-player, he banked his gun three times on Rubber Rock and like to have killed Squinter-Joe. But Providence makes for friendship. Squinter and Natt were pals forever after, because Natt had done nothing except save Squinter's life. His shot killed a rattlesnake in Squinter's beard.

Thus, around the unromantic structure of a small-time business deal, Blake weaves a series of adventures in different localities from which he never seeks to wrest more than all the vital dramatic or descriptive effect he can; never, in any case, does he find any social implication in this material. The most one can say about "Riding the Mustang Trail" is that it is a good yarn, saltily told, always entrenched in the colorful realities of its limitations, and still never false because it seeks to be nothing more than it is.

NORMAN MACLEOD.

Vanity Fair

In Their Own Image, by Hamilton Basso. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

MR. BASSO'S new novel "In Their Own Image" represents an advance on his previous one in that he here declares with unequivocal directness the side he has taken in the social struggle. His disillusionment with the owning classes of Louisiana was evident in "Cinnamon Seed," as was his sense of Negro wrongs. But in that book his emotion was transmuted into narrative.

"In Their Own Image" moves with a stronger rage, employing at times the method of realism, but constantly approaching the simplicity of allegory. It is as though impatience with the fantastic world of winter visitors to Aiken had forced Mr. Basso to speak his mind openly, in a sort of angry declamation scarcely disguised as fictional dialogue, as soon as a glimpse has been had, beyond the terra-cotta dwarf-guarded gates, of the imitation château of the Mayonnaise Queen—with her perfect servants and her silly court of people who, on the substantial base of her fortune, maintain the illusion that they are the aristocracy of America. He does this, as a matter of fact, before that most unimpressive lady even appears. To be sure, she is there throughout, allegorically, as Money; but of the one-time Emma Troy of Rock Center, Illinois, nothing remains to show that she was ever human beyond the fact of her one dull son married to a nymphomaniac of impeccable ancestry, and her one unhappy daughter, about to be engaged to an imbecile Italian count. That Mr. Basso is morally justified in questioning Emma's right to existence goes without saying; but it is done before he has demonstrated that, as fiction, she exists at all.

It is, of course, part of Mr. Basso's thesis that such people as the rich of Aiken are deprived of reality by their money. But Aiken exists in appalling proximity to Berrytown, a mill village where families of five must be supported on sixty dollars a month, and where a strike will bring in its train pellagra, near-starvation, typhoid, deaths and dismissals. There, life is hopelessly real. But what of the millhands? They, too, except for their class-consciousness, are left somewhat in doubt. Timothy is localized in South Carolina by being made a father from fifteen; he works passionately for a union, provokes an unsuccessful strike. Young Michael appears always with his paint-box, like a saint with the instrument of his martyrdom. But, except allegorically, his painting is not altogether convincing. And his death at the hands of Emma's detectives, being heard only in a second-hand account, is affecting simply as the news item of any similar death would be. It works on emotions that are already there. But it does not create a new emotion.

The truth is, I believe, that in this book Mr. Basso has been in too great a hurry to get on to his opinions. And this has hurt his portrayal both of wastrels and workers. Opinions count in a novel only when they can be conceived in terms of character. If, for one moment, they are felt simply as the author's, then they are not worth a rush. That they are the right opinions will not save him. Besides, they will seem primary, like that mention of politics which, as Stendhal says, coming in the midst of imaginative interests, is like a pistol shot at a concert, deafening without being emphatic. Mr. Basso is too competent a novelist not to know this, and therefore I think we find him in this book working his way toward a form that will allow him a more immediate clarity.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP.

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Mr. Ford at Home

Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine, by Ford Madox Ford. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 372 pages, illustrated. $3.

PROVENCE, cockles of the Mediterranean civilization, is the chosen home of Ford Madox Ford, a born civilizer. Gourmet and chef of the arts of living and writing, he makes us relish Provençal history as a long simmered, substantial *pot-au-feu,* full of personally flavored tidbits. Writing is second nature to him; his prose runs like rivers and brooks, and what might have been merely journalism becomes a morality of civilization. "A man should not eat high cooking till he can cook . . . shall not travel till he has made a home. . . . " A man must know whereof he speaks: what is a glazed landscape to the tourist becomes a habitable country to the cultivator. To change the soul, not the scene, is the object of the journey; Ford covers the world at a café table in the sun, in "the frame of mind that is Provence"; he plucks kitchen herbs in the dust of the Great Trade Route, the golden mean that leads from the Middle Ages to the millennium.

Every man his own truck-gardener (every country producing what it can, bartering freely) may seem a garden-city remedy for the world indigestion caused by machine-age food; but the necessity of one era might profitably become the hobby of another. In the new practical economy, Mr. Ford points out, the greatest employment problem will be the productivity of leisure; and the old moral economy of a healthy mind in a healthy body will always yield the highest returns in the enjoyment of living. The value of this book is precisely the practical wisdom of "staying close to life" that Ford celebrates in Provence: from mistral to Mistral.

EVA GOLDBECK.

Nazi Spectroscope

Clashing Tides of Color, by Lothrop Stoddard. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 414 pages. $3.

LOTHROP STODDARD is distraught. His acute distress is occasioned by his observations on the shattering of the comity of Europe by the World War and the Russian Revolution, the rebellious spirit of the surging native movements encouraged by the Soviet Union and the mounting rate of race mixture. "The grim truth is that today, humanly speaking, *there are no more certitudes,*" he writes plaintively. We are "in a world in disintegration." He sounds the alarm that Latin America is threatened with destruction by "Asiatism, Indianism, mongrelism and communism." China is described as "a colossus run wild." In India hell is due to break loose. "Should Asia go Red," he predicts, "the sudden release of the ignorant, brutal Oriental masses from their traditional restraints of religion and custom would mean the wrecking of Oriental civilization and culture. . . . Billions of European and American capital invested in Eastern lands would for the most part be hopelessly lost." And so he bemoans the passing of the "almost religious spirit of consecration with which the great European empire builders undertook their tasks."

The author is already hailed in Nazi Germany as an eminent American scientist on the basis of his earlier work, "The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy," which incited the Ku Klux Klan and inflamed anti-Oriental sentiment on the West Coast. The present book, which is grotesque in its anthropology and irresponsible in its historical reconstructions, will undoubtedly bring him further acclaim in Nazi circles. It promises to be widely quoted by Hearst and others as the fascist movement grows in the United States. For fascism is credited with having discovered in patriotism an effective antidote to the spread of Communism, "thus preventing what might have been a widespread epidemic of class wars, proscriptions and massacres" by ruthless fanatics who fly "in the face of both human experience and modern scientific discoveries concerning our emotional and spiritual qualities." Fascist philosophy is likewise commended for tending toward "realistic experimentation" in its uncompromising revolt against sentimentality and against the worship of "theoretical abstractions" such as Democracy, Liberty, Equality, Inalienable Rights and Parliamentary Government that "sit like Gods in a heathen temple, paralyzing the thought and energy of mankind."

We have in this volume a clear inkling of what social science will become in America if fascism triumphs.

BERNHARD J. STERN.

The Red Commander

Chapayev, by Dmitri Furmanov. New York: International Publishers. 423 pages. $2.

IF THIS book about life on the Red front during the Russian civil war is not everything it might be, it is thanks largely to the fact that its author was studying too intensively how to be a good revolutionary fighter and party diplomat to have time for such more peaceful arts as those of reporting or novel-writing (and thanks also to the wooden ineptitude of its translator's English). Furmanov joined the Chapayev division in the early months of 1919, to be its Commissar—that is, to fight when there was fighting and to organize, smooth over, give political counsel when there was not. Somewhere in between, he managed to record in a diary scraps of conversations, whole dispatches, notes on the countryside and on the turbulent, desperate life of those camps and marches.

These scattered notes he has rounded out from memory into a book that is as much a biography of the period as of Chapayev, and as fragmentary and incomplete with regard to one as to the other. This is mostly natural, but it could have been greatly cleaned up if Furmanov were not always crossing a bridge several times before coming near it, often without getting to the other side at all, and mixing helter-skelter accounts of tactics with personal reactions in which there is a strong trace of inconsistency. He exalts the popular figure of his Vassily Ivanovich, as an invincible leader and brave shrewd man (he really loved him, and was able to curb some of his more fiery qualities), and then at another time he is about willing to admit that the heroic figure was all done by the mirrors of showmanship. The end result is that while many sides of Chapayev's nature and many facts explaining his life are to be found in Furmanov's pages, a far more genuine and endearing figure is built up by Boris Babochkin in the movie that has recently been taken from them. (All this, of course, in the face of the movie's tendency to gloze over with traces of the idyllic, invent, simplify and in general twist things to suit its own purposes, in the manner natural to movies.) Let us say that the book covers the whole field, but with a dark glass; the picture, using rather the magnifying glass of drama, focuses on a narrowed field under a clearer, more vivid and more memorable light.

OTIS FERGUSON.

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Planned Bureaucracy

Government in a Planned Democracy, by Arthur N. Holcombe. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 182 pages. $2.

PROFESSOR Holcombe has produced a suave but unconvincing defense of the right of the middle class to political dominance. He argues that only by vesting the balance of political power in the hands of the ten percent of the population comprising the middle class will it be possible for the United States to avoid the twin evils of fascism, the dictatorship of the capitalist, and communism, the dictatorship of the proletariat. The resulting dictatorship of the middle class (a designation the author studiously avoids) is not itself another evil because the special interests of the middle class "come nearer to coinciding with the general interests of the whole community than those of any other class." A "planned democracy" is, accordingly, that ideal state in which the political influence of the rich because of their wealth and the political influence of the poor because of their numbers are neatly balanced and controlled by the political influence of the middle class because of its facility in attaining public office. Following the example of the New Deal, this political legerdemain is to be effected by giving capital, labor and "management" quasi-political power by means of code authorities, labor boards and the like, while at the same time maintaining the traditional American form of sectional representation whereby lawyers and other members of the middle class continue to constitute the overwhelming majority of our legislative bodies. How such an unwieldy set-up of opposing interests can be expected to cure the economic woes of capitalism the author gives not the slightest intimation. LEO ABRAHAM.

Fiction Notes

The One-Eyed Moon, by Marguerite Steen. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

IN THIS novel the author of "Matador" has again chosen southern Spain for her setting. Her chief character is Aurelio Lopez, a village sage, who spends almost all his time thinking. But being possessed also of what the blurb describes as "less ephemeral qualities," he marries an unbalanced, shrewish wife and, on the day their daughter is born, has an affair with an actress who bears him a son. The net outcome is the not entirely new complication of the son and daughter falling in love without realizing their blood relationship. Because of a complete lack of economy in words and description, which makes even the passages of intended drama slow and unwieldy, the novel moves sluggishly and badly needs a breath of fresh air.

R. V.

Abraham, Prince of Ur, by W. G. Hardy. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.50.

Mr. Hardy's novel, based on the life of Abraham, the legendary progenitor of the Hebrews, is a highly original and fascinating performance. In the Biblical narrative, all of Abraham's life up to his arrival in Canaan is left a total blank, while more than one-half of Mr. Hardy's novel is taken up with Abraham's childhood, youth and early manhood in Ur. Thus we are introduced to Abraham's parents, life in Ur, Abraham's meeting and falling in love with Sarah, princess of the Habiru (Hebrews), and his involvement in a political intrigue that sends him running for dear life to Harran. His subsequent wanderings to Canaan, Egypt, and back to Canaan, give occasion for description

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of life in those countries. Although historical and legendary material is utilized, the plot is mainly original invention. The principal characters are completely realized and endowed with life; Sarah, in particular, is superbly rendered. Certain brutalities imputed to Abraham are quite unnecessary for the purposes of the story. There are elements in the plot, such as the conflict between Abraham and Sarah as well as Abraham's search for a new god, that might have been utilized for imparting a social significance to the story, but Mr. Hardy has not availed himself of the opportunity.

H. S.

Mount Peacock, by Marie Mauron. Translated by F. L. Lucas. New York: The Macmillan Company. $1.75.

The author views the village life of her native Provence as a born outsider, amused, nostalgic. She finds it quaint—which means stopping short of true acquaintance; picturesque—which means seeing it at one remove. A miniature, oh so much better world: progress battles to install four street-lamps, but natural enlightenment triumphs. The reduction in scale isn't an effective reduction to absurdity, however; and the individualist writing "in praise of" human values seems to marvel at their survival without modern conveniences. She romanticizes peasant wisdom as free-willed "acceptance," without asking how far it surmounts the racial experience or is submitted to the daily grind of living close to the soil. She revels in the energetic colors given human nature by the Provençal sun, but as she paints the characters they fade into shades of the same type. The calm and exuberance that are the individualist's envy are missing in these nervous stories.

E. G.

Contributors

ALEXANDER WERTH is Paris correspondent for The Manchester Guardian. His book, "France in Ferment," was published early this year by Harpers.

CHARLES W. COLLIER has been the special assistant to the Director of the Soil Conservation Service since its organization in the fall of 1933. He is an architect and a city-planner by training, and prior to his connection with the Soil Conservation Service assisted his father, Mr. John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in the conservation activities of that bureau.

PEARL DANNIEL and her husband, an ex-soldier, have lived for the past twenty years on a 600-acre homestead in the region of Frazer, Montana. Their ranch is ten miles from the mail route and fifty-two miles from the nearest town.

CHESTER T. CROWELL, a newspaperman of wide experience, has contributed fiction and articles to many magazines. He is now living in Washington, D. C.

JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY is an art critic and author of "Plastic Redirections in Twentieth Century Painting."

ELLA WINTER, a graduate of the London School of Economics, is the author of "Red Virtue," a book on Soviet manners and morals.

NORMAN MACLEOD, author of "Horizons of Death," a book of verse, was born in Oregon and spent much of his childhood and youth in the West and Middle West.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP'S latest book was "Act of Darkness," a novel published last fall by Scribner's and soon to be brought out in England by Jonathan Cape.

EVA GOLDBECK is a free-lance writer who recently spent several years in Europe as French and German translator for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

BERNHARD J. STERN is a lecturer in Anthropology at the New School for Social Research and in Sociology at Columbia University. He is the editor of "Young Man's Diary," the youthful journal of Lester F. Ward, which has just been published.

LEO ABRAHAM holds the Henry E. Johnston scholarship in Philosophy at Johns Hopkins University and is writing a book on the theory of meaning.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Richard Vaughan, Herman Simpson and Eva Goldbeck.

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